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WILLIAM E. BURTON

ACTOR, AUTHOR, AND MANAGER

A SKETCH OF HIS CAREER

WITH

RECOLLECTIONS OF HIS PERFORMANCES

BY

WILLIAM L. KEESE

ILLUSTRATED

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TO

THE DAUGHTERS OF WILLIAM E. BURTON

THE AUTHOR'S FRIENDS OF MANY YEARS, THIS MEMORIAL OF
THEIR DISTINGUISHED FATHER IS AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED

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PREFACE.

THE present volume was prompted by the thought that no adequate account of the late William E. Burton had been given to the public. During his life no man was better known, and his death called forth a universal expression of admiration for his genius and regret for his loss. In the many obituary notices by the press some brief details of his career were given; but the narrative was necessarily confined to the narrow limits of a newspaper article. An actor so eminent—one of the greatest in his line the stage has known,—whose name is identified with certain delineations of character that died with him; whose renown stamped his theatre with a celebrity distinct and remarkable; a Shakespearian scholar, whose devotion to the poet, attested

by the incomparable library he amassed, was only equalled by his interpretation of the master's spirit, surely is entitled to a more pains-taking and a more extended record. An endeavor is here made to supply such need; and in the view taken of Burton as Actor, Author, and Manager, the relation is from birth to death.

In the preparation of this volume, the author owns his indebtedness to Ireland's "Records of the New York Stage," Wood's "Personal Recollections," Wemyss's "Theatrical Biography," Hutton's "Plays and Players," Phelps's "Players of a Century," Clapp's "Record of the Boston Stage," and Stone's "Theatrical Reminiscences." The writer also gratefully acknowledges the assistance given him by members of Mr. Burton's family, and their loan to him of old play-bills, engravings, letters, etc. Mr. Matteson, of New York, may also be mentioned in acknowledgment of friendly aid.

The illustrations accompanying the memoir

will be viewed with interest. The frontispiece is from a daguerreotype, and has been chosen as a faithful likeness of the comedian. The *Bob Acres* is from a painting by T. Sully, Jr.; the *Dr. Ollapod* from a portrait by Henry Inman; the *Captain Cuttle* and *Aminadab Sleek* from daguerreotypes; the *Timothy Toodles* from a photograph. All the above were family possessions. The picture of the Chambers Street Theatre is from a water-color drawing in the collection of Thomas J. McKee, Esq.

Many shortcomings will doubtless be found in this book, and readers of it who are old playgoers may think of many things the author has missed. But we are told by Ruskin that there is "no purpose so great but that slight actions may help it," and by Wordsworth that

"Small service is true service while it lasts."

DECEMBER, 1884. W. L. K.

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WILLIAM E. BURTON.

1804–1860.

"*He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so.*"—SHAKESPEARE.

WILLIAM E. BURTON.

1804–1834.

WILLIAM EVANS BURTON, the son of William George Burton, an author of some repute, was born in London, September 24, 1804, and died in New York, February 10, 1860. His father was a printer, with a bent of mind toward theology, and gave expression to his views in a work entitled "Biblical Researches," published in the close of the last century. The son was classically educated in St. Paul's School in London, an institution where, before his day, Elliston and the elder Mathews were instructed; and the father's design was to prepare him for the ministry. The parent's death, however, summoned him from his studies, and, at the age of eighteen, he assumed the direction of the printing-office, which he managed for the maintenance of his mother. It may be observed

that one of the specialties of the elder Burton's business was the printing of classical works, and the son's knowledge had often been of service in the matter of proof-reading. From the printing-office he was led to the experiment of editing a monthly magazine, thus early revealing an inclination toward the profession of letters which never wholly deserted him; fostered by sundry efforts of authorship in his native land, and appearing subsequently, in this country, in his conduct of "The Gentleman's Magazine" and "Literary Souvenir," and in the compilation known as "Burton's Cyclopædia of Wit and Humor."

The youthful experiment was not a substantial success, and did not long continue; but his editorship brought him into connection with certain members of the dramatic profession, and he was persuaded (we wonder if persuasion were really needed!) to make a trial of his stage ability by playing with a company of amateurs. His success in this venture foreshadowed his destiny, and we find him in 1825

performing with a provincial company on the Norwich, Sussex, and Kent circuits.

We cannot help the indulgence, at this moment, of a playful fancy regarding Burton's early efforts. Did he, in the exemplification of tragedy, which he then aspired to, reveal by a single facial example the dawning of a future *Toodle?* Could imagination discover in the dagger of *Macbeth* the hook, and in the Thane himself the features, of *Ed'ard Cuttle, Mariner of England?* Did the thoughtful countenance of *Hamlet* suggest in any possible way the lugubriousness of an incipient *Sleek?* Did he make his Majesty George IV. laugh at Windsor, where, as tradition has it, he played before the king at this stage of his career? We know not; but the mask of Melpomene had been thrown aside when, after another round of the provinces, with varying success, but gaining celebrity through an unusually wide range of parts, he made his first appearance in London in 1831, as *Wormwood*, in "The Lottery Ticket," a character that became famous in

his hands. This engagement was at the Pavilion Theatre, and was a highly successful one. The great Liston, just twice Burton's age, was then at the Haymarket, and we can imagine with what emulous admiration the young comedian regarded the veteran actor. He little dreamed that many of Liston's renowned characters would descend to him by right of ability and comic power! In the following year (1832) Liston retired from the Haymarket, "through a pique," as they say, and Burton succeeded him; but the audiences retained too vivid a recollection of Liston's performances, and the engagement was only moderately successful. Recovering suddenly from his disaffection, Liston returned to the Haymarket, and Burton in his turn retired, to once more make the rounds of the provinces. But he bore with him one remembrance in connection with the Haymarket that consoled him for many a disappointment; and that was the thought of having played *Marall* to Edmund Kean's *Sir Giles Overreach*. The story runs

that Mrs. Glover,[1] a leading actress of the company, objected for some reason to the *Marall*, and declared that she or Burton should be omitted in the cast. Kean, despite irregularities, still retained a remnant of his old sway, and he insisted on being supported by Burton. The result was that Mrs. Glover was compelled to yield, and in due course *Marall* appeared before a full house, containing many celebrities of the day. It was at this time, too, that a production of his pen—the play of "Ellen Wareham,"[2]—enjoyed the unusual distinction of being performed at five London theatres on the same evening. A year and a half went by in efforts to enhance his reputation, and it may be said that his career was not free from the vicissitudes that frequently attend dramatic

[1] Dr. Doran, in his "Annals of the Stage," referring to Kean in various parts, says: "Among these, *Sir Giles* stands pre-eminent for its perfectness, from the first words, 'Still cloistered up,' to the last convulsive breath drawn by him in that famous *one* scene of the fifth act, in which, through his terrible intensity, he once made so experienced an actress as Mrs. Glover faint away,—not at all out of flattery, but from emotion."

[2] First produced, May, 1833.

itineracy. But through it all he gained ground and advanced steadily in his profession. He played almost every thing; his industry was indefatigable, his will indomitable. The lamp of experience never waned; and that knowledge gained from contact with the world and human nature, was a preparation for events and emergencies in another scene and another land. For now his thoughts were turned toward the United States, and in 1834 he determined to cross the ocean, and to take the chance of fortune and of fame.

1834-1848.

Burton landed on our shores unheralded, to begin the twenty-five years of the artistic career which holds so conspicuous a place in the annals of dramatic achievement. He was not "brought over," and he came at his own expense. He came, indeed, with the prestige of having written "Ellen Wareham," and of having made a comic character[1] famous by

[1] *Wormwood*, in "The Lottery Ticket."

fifty consecutive representations; but he was simply announced as coming "from the Pavilion Theatre, London," and he made his first appearance in America at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, under the management of Maywood & Co., on September 3, 1824, playing *Dr. Ollapod*, in Colman's "Poor Gentleman," and *Wormwood*, in "The Lottery Ticket." *Ollapod* always remained one of Burton's most effective parts. The portrait, on another page, of the comedian in that character is from an engraving by J. Sartain of a picture painted from life by Henry Inman, in 1840.

There lies before us a bill (elsewhere reproduced) of the above theatre, dated Wednesday, September 10, 1834, being the fourth night of Burton's first engagement in this country. The plays on the occasion were Sheridan's comedy of "The Rivals" and the farce of "The Lottery Ticket,"—which last seems to have met with great favor, as the bill states it to be a repetition, owing to "numerous enquiries having been made at the box-office":

thus beginning the train of similar "numerous enquiries" with which, in the years to come, his own box-office became familiar. Burton was the *Bob Acres* of the comedy and *Wormwood* in the farce. Then at the age of thirty, we can believe that the comedian's unfolding genius gave full promise of the delightful humor which clothed his *Acres* at a later day; and that in the *Wormwood* of the farce he afforded glimpses of that wealth of comic power which thereafter, and for so long, he lavished for the amusement of the public. Miss Pelham was the *Lydia Languish* and Miss Elphinstone the *Julia*, English actresses of no special distinction; but it is interesting to note that Miss Elphinstone became the second wife of Sheridan Knowles, the author of a celebrated and far more popular *Julia* than the lady of "The Rivals," and who appeared on the Philadelphia stage of that year.

Something akin to his reception by the audiences at the Haymarket in London, was for a time Burton's experience in Philadelphia.

MR. HUDSON AS FOR SCALES

As the recollection of Liston by the London audience dwarfed the efforts of the youthful aspirant, so the memory of Joseph Jefferson, senior, (who played in the city as late as 1830,[1]) diluted the interest felt in the new actor by the Philadelphia benches.[2] But the native force and humorous capability of the comedian were destined to conquer indifference; and, although the creative genius which informed his subsequent delineations was yet to be made clearly manifest, he soon had a secure footing; and a belief was strengthening in the public mind that an actor of rare endowments and promise had come from the land of Munden, Elliston, and Liston, and one who might, it was not too much to say, worthily perpetuate the traditions of Jefferson.

On the fifth night of his engagement (September 12, 1834) he played *Timothy Quaint*, in "The Soldier's Daughter," and *Tristam Sappy*, in the afterpiece of "Deaf as a Post," and so

[1] He died in 1832.

[2] So the memory of Burton in New York to-day may still be a warning of the danger of inviting comparison.

on through a round of characters in comedy and farce—*Daffodil Twod*, among the latter, in "The Ladies' Man"—written by himself—was a great favorite. And it may here be said, in passing, that the farce, which previous to Burton's advent had sunk into lethargy, revived under his touch and became a vital point of attraction. He made a great hit as *Guy Goodluck*, in "John Jones," in which part he sang a comic song—"A Chapter of Accidents"—and the fact leads us to remark that very few of those who saw the comedian in his ripe prime were aware of the musical talent he exhibited in earlier years, and that he made a specialty of introducing humorous ballads in his pieces, and sang them with marked effect. A collection of such songs, entitled "Burton's Comic Songster," was published in Philadelphia in 1850; and we were surprised, on looking it over, at the quantity of mirthful verse he had written and sung. The well-known ditty of "The Cork Leg," it may be mentioned, was written expressly for him.

ARCH STREET THEATRE.

Doors open at a quarter before 7. Performance to commence at half-past 7 o'clock.

BOX 75 - PIT 37½ - GALLERY 25 Cts.

Checks not Transferable.

FOURTH NIGHT of the Engagement of

MR. BURTON,

On which occasion will be presented Sheridan's Comedy of

THE RIVALS.

BOB ACRES, - - - MR. BURTON

LYDIA LANGUISH, Miss PELHAM.

JULIA, - - - - - - Miss ELPHINSTONE

Numerous enquiries having been made at the Box Office for a repetition of

THE LOTTERY TICKET,

It will be performed THIS EVENING.

WORMWOOD, - - - - - - MR. BURTON

WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1834,

Will be presented the Comedy of

THE RIVALS;

OR,

A TRIP TO BATH.

Written by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq.

BOB ACRES, - - - - - - MR. BURTON

Sir Anthony Absolute,	Mr. Faulkner	Fag,	Mr. Crutar
Capt. Absolute,	Mr. Murdoch	Coachman,	Mr. Broad
Faulkland,	Mr. Wood	Cook's Boy,	Mr. Kelly
Sir Lucius O'Trigger,	Mr. Hamilton	Mrs. Malaprop	Mrs. Jones
David,	Mr. Watson	Lucy,	Mrs. Thayer
Servant,	Mr. Eberle		

JULIA, - - - - Miss ELPHINSTONE

LYDIA LANGUISH, - - Miss PELHAM.

After which, the Laughable Farce of

THE LOTTERY TICKET.

WORMWOOD - - - - - - MR. BURTON

Performed by him upwards of Fifty successive nights in London.

Capias,	Mr. Watson	Susan,	Mrs. Thayer
Charles,	Mr. Hamilton	Mrs. Corset,	Miss Armstrong

To-Morrow Evening, the Opera of

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE.

COUNT BELLINO, - - - - - MR. HUNT

Being the Third Night of his Engagement.

The engagement of Burton with Maywood & Co. lasted two years, and was renewed for two more, during which period the comedian's powers greatly developed, and displayed remarkable versatility and dramatic resource. He widely extended his repertory, and was seen at the Arch and Chestnut Street theatres in a variety of comedy rôles and in innumerable farces. Among the many noted parts performed by him at various times we may name: *Ollapod*, in "The Poor Gentleman"; *Doctor Pangloss*, in "The Heir at Law"; *Farmer Ashfield*, in "Speed the Plough"; *Goldfinch*, in "The Road to Ruin"; *Billy Lackaday*, in "Sweethearts and Wives"; *Tony Lumpkin*, in "She Stoops to Conquer"; *Maw-worm*, in "The Hypocrite"; *Sir Peter Teazle* and *Sir Oliver Surface*, in "The School for Scandal"; *Mr. Dove* and *Mr. Coddle*, in "Married Life"; *Dogberry* and *Verges*, in "Much Ado About Nothing"; *Launcelot Gobbo*, in "The Merchant of Venice"; *Bob Acres*, in "The Rivals";—the last-named character he played on one

occasion with the conjunction of the elder Wallack as *Capt. Absolute*, Tyrone Power as *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, and Mr. Abbot (an actor celebrated in his day) as *Falkland;* truly a striking distribution. A few of the farces out of the many were "The Lottery Ticket," "Sketches in India," "The Mummy" (so famous in Chambers Street), "No Song No Supper," "John Jones," "Deaf as a Post," "The Ladies' Man," and a piece called "Cupid," which had won renown in England through the acting of the famous John Reeve.

Burton's growing popularity was substantially shown in the attendance at his regular benefits. They were always bumpers, and occasions of warm demonstrations of regard. He was always ready, too, with his sympathy and support where the claims of a professional brother were in question. William B. Wood, in his "Personal Recollections of the Stage," to which work we are indebted for much useful information, refers to an occurrence of the kind as follows: "I must apologize for the

mention here of a circumstance purely personal, which proved one of the most gratifying events of my life. During the month of December, 1835, while acting in Chestnut Street, Burton called me aside between the acts, and with an expression of great pleasure, informed me that a meeting for the purpose of giving me a grand benefit had just adjourned, after completing the necessary arrangements. This was the first hint I ever had of this intention. The object was at once carried into effect, and on the 11th of January, 1836, I was honored by the presence of one of the most brilliant audiences ever assembled. * * * The following entertainment was offered: 'Three and Deuce,' two acts of 'Venice Preserved,' 'John of Paris,' 'Antony's Orations,' and a new song, and 'How to die for Love.' I was favored in these pieces with the valuable aid of Mr. Balls, Mr. J. Wallack, Mr. Abbot, Mrs. and Miss Watson, Mr. Wemyss, and Mr. Burton."

In the years while the comedian was advancing in his profession, and acquiring that knowl-

edge of the stage which distinguished his subsequent management, his pen was not idle. He wrote several farces, and contributed stories and sketches to the periodicals of the day. These articles were widely read, and a collection of them was published by Peterson at a later date, with the title, "Waggeries and Vagaries"—a volume that has afforded entertainment to many readers of light literature. The literary taste referred to at the beginning of this narrative now sought indulgence, and in 1837 he started "The Gentleman's Magazine," a monthly publication of original miscellany. Articles of his own appeared in it from time to time, among others a graceful and appreciative sketch of his friend, James Wallack. He continued the editorship until July, 1839, when he associated Edgar A. Poe with him in the control.

To those who have paid any attention to the career of the gifted author of "The Raven," as depicted by various pens in recent years, it need scarcely be said that, though a man of

genius, he was not without frailties; and his warmest defenders will not deny that his life was marred by many irregularities of conduct. He was appointed editor of the magazine at a fixed salary, and the arrangement was such as to give him leisure to contribute to other periodicals and to produce many of his famous tales. "Happier now," says one of his biographers,[1] "than he had been for years past, for his prospects seemed assured, his work regular, interesting, and appreciated, his fame increasing, he writes to one friend that he 'has quite overcome the dangerous besetment,' and to another that he is 'a model of temperance and other virtues.'" For nearly a year he remained with Burton; "but," continues the same biographer, "so liable was he still to sudden relapses that the actor was never with confidence able to leave the city. Returning on one occasion after the regular day of publication, he found the number unfinished, and his editor incapable of duty. He left remonstrances to

[1] Henry Curwen, "Sorrow and Song." London, 1875.

the morrow, prepared the 'copy' himself, and issued the magazine, and then to his astonishment received a letter from his assistant, the tone of which may be inferred from Burton's answer: 'I am sorry you have thought it necessary to send me such a letter. Your troubles have given a morbid tone to your feelings which it is your duty to discourage. I myself have been as severely handled by the world as you can possibly have been, but my sufferings have not tinged my mind with melancholy, nor jaundiced my views of society. You must rouse your energies, and if care assail you, conquer it. I will gladly overlook the past. I hope you will as easily fulfil your pledges for the future. We shall agree very well, though I cannot permit the magazine to be made a vehicle for that sort of severity which you think is so "successful with the mob." I am truly much less anxious about making a monthly "sensation" than I am upon the point of fairness. You must, my dear sir, get rid of your avowed ill-feelings toward your brother

authors. You see I speak plainly; I cannot do otherwise upon such a subject. You say the people love havoc. I think they love justice. * * * But I wander from my design. I accept your proposition to re-commence your interrupted avocations upon the *Maga*. Let us meet as if we had not exchanged letters. Use more exercise, write when feelings prompt, and be assured of my friendship. You will soon regain a healthy activity of mind, and laugh at your past vagaries.'" We think nothing can be clearer than that Burton had good cause for fault-finding, and that he was more than considerate and just in his frank expression of feeling.

We do not intend to pursue the ill-starred connection further. A more glaring offence on Poe's part severed the relationship, and not long thereafter the magazine was sold out to Graham and merged in his "Casket," the consolidation ultimately to become "Graham's Magazine."

"The Literary Souvenir," an annual pub-

lished by Carey & Hart, was edited by Burton in 1838 and 1840, and its pages contained many of his entertaining sketches. He also contributed to the "Knickerbocker Magazine" a series of theatrical papers styled "The Actor's Alloquy." Occasional starring tours belong to the chronicle of these years, and there lies before us a bill of the American Theatre, Walnut Street, dated October 14, 1839, announcing "First night of the re-engagement of Mr. Burton," and also that "His Excellency Martin Van Buren, President of the United States, will honor the theatre with his presence." The President must have been greatly amused, for not only did he see the comedian as *Tom Tape* and *Peeping Tom*, but he also saw him "dance with Mrs. Hunt the Minuet de la Cour and Gavotte de Vestris." Burton was fairly well known now throughout the Union—except in the town of Napoleon, on the Mississippi River, where, if we may believe Mr. Davidge, he found his Waterloo. The engagement had not been profitable, and his only hope was by

personally drumming for his benefit. So he deposited a goodly number of tickets with the bartender at the hotel where he was staying, with a polite request that he would use his best endeavor to get rid of them. The benefit came off, and the attendance was very flattering. After the play the comedian invited several friends up to the bar, and there had the satisfaction of learning that the man had managed to dispose of all the tickets entrusted to him. This was very gratifying; but no offer of settlement being made, he ventured to suggest that, as he was on the point of quitting the town, he would like to have the pleasure of receiving the insignificant amount of seventy-five cents for each piece of pasteboard deposited. Mr. Davidge says it takes a great deal to astonish a barkeeper in Napoleon; but this one was distanced. He surveyed Burton for a quarter of a minute, and seeing not a muscle move in the comedian's expressive countenance, he said: "Look here, Mr. Billy Burton, none of your infernal Northern tricks

here; it won't do, no way! You told me to get rid of them tickets, and as I had promised I was bound to go straight through with it—*and by thunder, I was obliged to stand drinks to every man to take one!*" An audience may be uncultured if not lukewarm; and the unimpressible community of Napoleon reminds us that the "Antigone" of Sophocles was once produced under Burton's management, and, on loud and repeated calls for the *author*, the comedian presented himself before the footlights and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, it would give me the greatest pleasure to introduce the author of the play; but, unfortunately, he has been dead for more than twenty centuries, and I shall have to throw myself upon your indulgence."

Burton made his first appearance in New York October 31, 1837, at the old National Theatre in Leonard Street—then under the management of the elder Wallack—for the benefit of Samuel Woodworth, the poet, playing *Guy Goodluck*, in "John Jones"; and his

first appearance as a star was made at the same theatre February 4, 1839, when he played *Billy Lackaday*, in "Sweethearts and Wives," and *Guy Goodluck*. A complimentary benefit was given to Mr. Wallack in the same year, when Burton played *Sir Simon Slack*, in "Spring and Autumn." The opera of "Amilie; or, The Love Test" was produced on the same occasion. If we mistake not, he was connected with the management when the theatre was destroyed by fire not long after. He also appeared at Niblo's Garden as a star in this year, opening June 25th, and was seen in a round of parts, including *Gregory Thimblewell*, *Euclid Facile*, *Ignatius Polyglott*, and *Tobias Munns*, in his own farce of "Forty Winks." He first appeared on the Park stage June 2, 1840, playing *Sir Timothy Stilton*, in "Patrician and Parvenu," the occasion being a complimentary benefit to Peter Richings; and in the same month acted at Niblo's Garden. At his benefit (July 6th) he played *Brown*, in "Kill and Cure," and *Fluid* in "The Water Party." The

participation of the Cushman sisters in this entertainment greatly enhanced its interest and attractiveness. In this year he fitted up Cooke's circus-building in Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, calling it the National Theatre. He gathered a fine company and was very prosperous. Charlotte and Susan Cushman appeared there, and the sterling comedians Henry and Thomas Placide were among the force. The fairy piece, "The Naiad Queen," was there presented for the first time in the United States, and brought wealth to the manager's coffers. A large amount of his earnings by this enterprise he invested in Nick Biddle's United States Bank, and in the downfall of that institution suffered severely.

In 1841, after a brief engagement at the Providence theatre, he returned to New York, and leased the rebuilt theatre corner of Leonard and Church streets, where his first appearance in New York had been made; brought on his Philadelphia company, and there established himself. This was April 13, 1841, and

his first essay as manager in New York. He transported all the beautiful scenery of "The Naiad Queen," and reproduced the piece with gratifying success. But a dread fatality seemed to attend this temple of the drama. As, while under Wallack's management, it was destroyed by fire, so the same doom befell it under Burton. In the height of prosperity the building was again consumed, and with it the elaborate and splendid scenery of "The Naiad Queen." Of this calamity, F. C. Wemyss, in his "Theatrical Biography," remarks: "On this occasion a magnificent and extensive wardrobe, the property of Mr. Burton, was consumed, together with his private wardrobe, manuscripts, books, and other articles of considerable value. He was not insured to the amount of a dollar. The citizens of New York expressed their sympathy with the manager; and a complimentary benefit at the Park placed a handsome sum at his disposal." Undaunted by a disaster which would have utterly discouraged most men, Burton again sought Phil-

adelphia, and after starring for a brief season leased the Chestnut Street Theatre for a fresh essay. There for a while he continued with good fortune, until better prospects invited him to Arch Street, where at last he located with a view to permanency. Meeting now with rich success, he determined to extend his sphere of operation, and added in turn to his lesseeship the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore, and the theatre in Washington; so that in 1845–6 he was guiding the destinies of three dramatic houses, distinguished for well-chosen companies and for the admirable manner in which the plays were mounted and cast. But again the fiat of destiny was written in words of flame. The Washington theatre, for the first time in many years, was handsomely rewarding its manager, when one night, during the performance, the scenery caught fire, and the building was burnt to the ground. The Baltimore theatre was continued; but the lion's share of attention was given to Arch Street, and there for several years Burton enjoyed a

flow of prosperity; his fame increasing in public estimation; surprising and delighting all by his wonderful acting, and by the knowledge, taste, and liberality, with which he catered for his patrons. But New York was in the manager's thoughts and seemed to beckon him Northward. Perhaps Burton's prophetic gaze discerned in the great city a field that would respond to careful tillage, and that the rapid growth of the metropolis could not fail to give momentum to enterprise. Whatever the motive spring, the step was taken, and in 1848 the building known as Palmo's Opera-House became Burton's Theatre.

In this brief survey of fourteen years, the absence of detail in many instances will be pardoned, we hope, on a reflection of what it may suggest. We are aware of the interest attaching to strength of companies, citations of casts, and notes of special performance; and in all theatrical histories such details should evoke the most careful consideration. The Philadelphia record, however, is not always full and

clear on those points, as respects individual careers, even in one so active and fruitful as our subject's; for, so far as we know, there is no history of the stage of that city which pretends to do for its dramatic life what Ireland has done for the New York stage—regarding which monument of painstaking fidelity, William Winter, in the preface to his recent admirable volume on "The Jeffersons," truly says: "Every writer who touches upon the history of the drama in America must acknowledge his obligation for guidance and aid to the thorough, faithful and suggestive records made by the veteran historian, Joseph N. Ireland." Yet, in depicting the career of a great actor, many things are rendered subordinate which in a history of the drama of any given period would receive due prominence. That the career of Burton in Philadelphia from 1834 to 1848 embraced much of its stage history during those years, will, of course, be understood; and we shall be sorry if our readers, at the same time, fail to discern the industry,

sagacity, courage, and varied powers—with which the actor, author, and manager, illustrated those years—suggested by this recital.

We now approach a period within the memory of many persons now living. Some few octogenarians may survive who can recall Burton's performances of over forty years ago ; but they must be few indeed ; and their recollections cannot be otherwise than dim and uncertain. But the achievements of Burton in Chambers Street ; the unexampled popularity of his theatre ; the unequalled company he gathered there ; the indisputable creations of character that there originated ; the birth of a revival of Shakespeare, with a felicity of conception that revealed the appreciative student, and with a beauty and minuteness of appointment unprecedented at the time ;—all this, through a decade of years, forms an enchanting reminiscence vivid still in the retrospect of numberless New Yorkers. It is not surprising that we of the city of New York forget that the comedian so long belonged to Philadelphia.

So brilliant was his success in Chambers Street that all other theatres where he flourished seem to be viewed by the reflected light of that; and we think there will be no question that there were clustered his rarest triumphs and there blossomed the flower of his fame.

BURTON'S THEATRE.

CHAMBERS STREET.

"*There is the playhouse now, there must you sit.*"

—SHAKESPEARE.

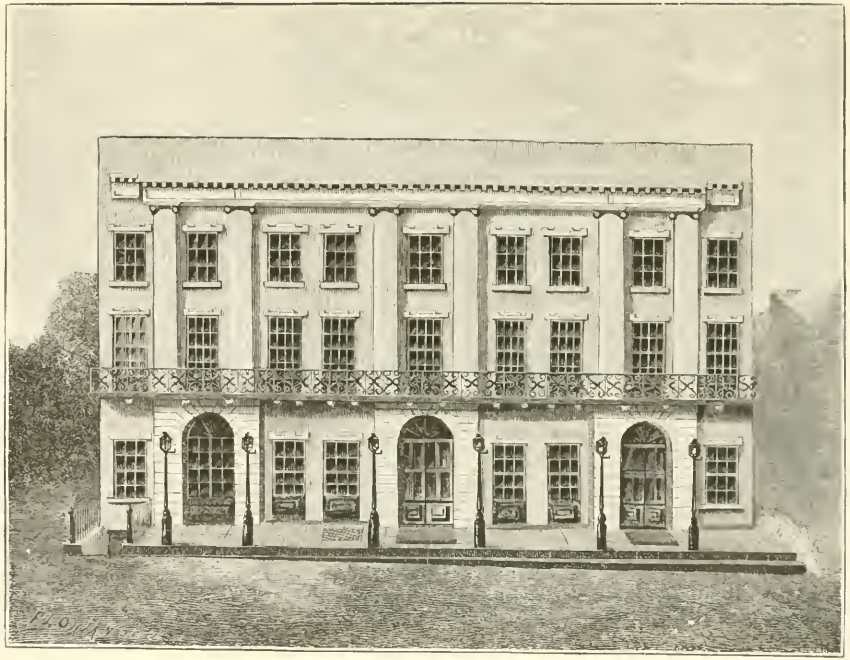
BURTON IN NEW YORK.

1848–1856.

PALMO'S Opera-House was built in 1842, and, according to Wemyss' Chronology, was the sixteenth theatre erected in New York. It was built by Ferdinand Palmo, and designed for the presentation of Italian opera. To Palmo, it is said, belongs the honor of having first introduced that department of music in the city. In 1844 he opened with "Lucia di Lammermoor"; but the support given to his venture was not generous, notwithstanding the fact that wealth and fashion still resided in Warren, Murray, and Beekman streets. The time apparently was not ripe; the experiment ended in financial ruin to Palmo, and the unfortunate man never wholly recovered from the blow. The house passed into divers hands, and was the scene of a variety of entertain-

ments for two or three years afterward. The writer remembers distinctly going there of an afternoon, when a boy, to a circus entertainment. The place was at a low ebb in point of popularity and attraction when the comedian fixed upon it as his future professional home. He rearranged, fitted it up, and adorned it, and called it BURTON'S THEATRE.

It had no doubt long been a dream of the manager to attain as nearly as possible to perfection in the organization and direction of a first-class theatre. His varied experience in Philadelphia and elsewhere constantly suggested an administration composed of members equally valuable in their respective lines, and forming an harmonious whole under an efficient executive, as the best system of government for the growth and development of dramatic art; and perhaps during his reign in Chambers Street he came as near the realization of that dream as is permitted to human aspiration. In confirmation of the foregoing, we quote a passage from William B. Wood's Recollections,



Palmo's Opera-House, afterward Burton's Theatre. (After a water-color drawing in the collection of Thomas J. McKee, Esq.)

where, writing in 1854 of the evils of the star system, he says: "Let me here remark, that I am happy to see of late times—I mean within the last few years—that the pernicious system of which I speak, by carrying itself fairly out, and by so breaking up all sound stock companies, has finally destroyed itself. * * * To that intelligent manager, Mr. Burton, the first credit is due. He has been striving for a number of years in New York, as he had been doing here in Philadelphia, to bring his theatre to a proper system, based on the principles of common sense and experience. With talents of his own equalled by few stars, he has preferred to ascertain whether the public could not be better attracted by a good stock company of combined talent, and every New Yorker knows with what excellent effect he has labored. His success, I am happy to learn, has amply confirmed his reputation for dramatic judgment."

We may supplement this by a paragraph taken from Laurence Hutton's entertaining

volume of "Plays and Players." Describing in glowing terms the production of Buckstone's comedy of "Leap Year," at Burton's, March 1, 1850, Mr. Hutton says: "That our readers may fully comprehend the subject and period of which we write, it will be well to remind them, perhaps, that the art of acting had arrived at such a point in Burton's Theatre, that, to play a comedy well, was not enough. Every thing was so well done, so perfect in every respect, mere excellence was so much a matter of course, was so positive, on the Chambers Street boards, that there was but little room for the comparative, and the superlative itself was necessary to create a sensation."

The Chambers Street Theatre opened July 10, 1848, with "Maidens, Beware"; "Raising the Wind," and "The Irish Dragoon." These were succeeded by "New York in Slices," "Dan Keyser de Bassoon," and "Lucy Did Sham Amour." The work was slow at first, but the disappearance of money was rapid.

We have seen, however, that there was no limit to Burton's energy and perseverance. He played in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, week after week; managed, in conjunction with John Brougham, an engagement with Mr. W. C. Macready at Ford's Theatre, Boston, October, 1848; was announced, on Macready's departure, to appear himself; but the intention was unfulfilled, and so it chanced that he never acted there until the last years of his life. He played for the benefit of the widow and family of Edmund Simpson, at the Park Theatre, December 7, 1848, in referring to which event Mr. Ireland says: "We insert the entire bill to show the forgetfulness of self evinced by the volunteers, and their willingness to assume any character to insure the best result, there being no less than five gentlemen in the cast who had played, and might justly have laid claim to the principal character of the play." The play was "The School for Scandal," cast principally as follows:

SIR PETER TEAZLE . .	Mr. HENRY PLACIDE.
SIR OLIVER SURFACE . .	" WM. E. BURTON.
JOSEPH SURFACE . . .	" THOMAS BARRY.
CHARLES SURFACE . .	" GEORGE BARRETT.
CRABTREE	" W. R. BLAKE.
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE .	" PETER RICHINGS.
CARELESS	" C. M. WALCOT.
SIR HARRY	" H. HUNT.
MOSES	" JOHN POVEY.
TRIP	" DAWSON.
LADY TEAZLE . . .	Mrs. SHAW.
LADY SNEERWELL . .	" JOHN GILBERT.
MRS. CANDOUR . . .	" WINSTANLEY.
MARIA	Miss MARY TAYLOR.

This deed of charity was followed by others for the same object on the part of New York managers, and among them Burton contributed a night at his own theatre, on the 5th of March ensuing, in which the full strength of his company appeared.

The burning of the Park Theatre in 1848 left Burton without a rival. The Olympic was of the past; Forrest thundered at the Broadway; Wallack's and Daly's were yet to be. It was not long before the public discovered the genius that presided in Chambers Street, and recognized the unusual excellence which char-

acterized the performances. The location was favorable for Brooklyn people, and from first to last the theatre enjoyed a monopoly of their patronage. "For several years," says Ireland, "Burton's Theatre was the resort of the most intelligent class of pleasure-seekers, and there beauty, wit, and fashion, loved to congregate, without the formality or etiquette of attire once deemed necessary at the Park." Its fame was really phenomenal. Leaping metropolitan bounds, it spread to distant states and neighborhoods, and became, one might almost say, a familiar and welcome contribution to the social and intellectual communion of the time. For a stranger to come to New York in those days and omit to visit Burton's, would imply an obtuseness so forlorn, or an indifference so stolid, that in the one case he would be an object of compassion, and in the other a grave offender of public sentiment. But in all probability he looked forward during his journey city-ward to his evening in those halls of Momus; and we may be certain that the

" Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathèd smiles "

of that night lived in his memory for many a long day.

It is not too much to say that this attraction was almost wholly due to the extraordinary powers of Burton himself. True, his company embraced the finest artists in their several lines of any stage in the country; and it was well known to all lovers of refined drama that the Chambers Street Theatre was the home of English comedy, and that any given play could be there produced with a cast entirely adequate, and with a perfection of detail ensuring to the auditor an artistic delight and a representation of the highest class. But there are many who, while appreciating the delineation of manners and character, seek amusement pure and simple, and who believe that good digestion waits on hearty laughter. To this large constituency Burton was the objective point, for his humor and comic power were a perennial fountain of mirth. His ap-

pearance, either discovered when the curtain rose, or entering from the wing, was the signal for a ripple of merriment all over the house. Every countenance brightened, the dullest face glowed with gleeful expectancy. No actor, we believe—unless possibly Liston,—ever excelled Burton in humorous facial expression. Tom Hood, in referring to certain pastimes of a London evening, says in his felicitous rhyme:

> "Or in the small Olympic pit sit, split,
> Laughing at Liston, while you quiz his phiz."

Read the couplet thus:

> "Or in the *Chambers Street* snug pit sit, split,
> Laughing at *Burton*, while you quiz his phiz,"

and we have the nightly situation. It was a common circumstance for the theatre to receive accessions toward the close of the performance, the new-comers standing in line along the walls, drawn thither by the potent magnet of the manager in the farce. Thus it was that, though the theatre furnished constantly a rich feast of

comedy, and was more widely known than any other, still more celebrated was the great actor whose name it bore; and it was the magic of that name that drew the people, and it was he whom the people went to see. It seemed to make little difference what the bills announced; Burton would play,—and that was enough.

It was the privilege of the writer of these pages to have free access to the Chambers Street Theatre, and to know personally its manager, and his recollections are such as to induce him to believe that in no better way can he perform his task of completing Mr. Burton's career than by employing his own knowledge and recording the impressions he received. In so doing, the opportunity afforded for special reference to members of his company will be improved; and perhaps our retrospection may arouse in other breasts a remembrance of past delight.

Alluding to the comedian's first appearance in New York, October 31, 1837, Joseph N. Ireland, so often quoted, remarks: "The advent

of Mr. W. E. Burton, the most renowned comedian of recent days, demands more than a passing notice. For nearly twenty years no other actor monopolized so much of the public applause, and popular sentiment universally assigned him a position in broad low comedy entirely unrivalled on the American stage." It was a little over three years between his arrival in America and his New York débût; about eleven between that appearance and his lesseeship in Chambers Street; and eleven more remain to be taken note of. Of these, eight belong to Chambers Street, two to the uptown theatre, and one to starring engagements in various cities—the last being in Hamilton, Canada, and abruptly terminated by the malady of which he died.

The company at Chambers Street now demands our attention; and the wish to suitably recognize the talents, and to chronicle, however simply, the triumphs of that famous array, has constrained us to widen the scope of our origi-

nal design, and to extend somewhat our notices of certain individual actors. We shall in nowise regret this; for in recalling past delight it is a pleasure to dwell on those who caused it; and we may, perchance, awaken thereby a happy thought of them in other hearts. The departed years are full of memories, and the turning of a leaf may lay bare a volume of reminiscence. It forms no part of our purpose, however, to follow individual careers, and to trace their course on other boards than those of the Chambers Street Theatre. Many of them, indeed, after Burton removed uptown, and after his death, continued their successes and won renown in other scenes and under other management; and our readers may feel that but scant justice is done many meritorious names familiar to the present generation, in confining mention of them to a period when their talents and capabilities had not ripened to that excellence which afterward gave them fame. But we are concerned with them only as they figured as members of Burton's company, and as such

contributed richly to our fund of memory. They stand in the dramatic Pantheon with their great chief; and in approaching that central and dominant figure we pause to bend delighted gaze upon the admirable group surrounding it.

From 1848 to 1856 the following names were numbered on the muster-roll: Henry Placide, Blake, Brougham, Lester, T. B. Johnston, Bland, Jordan, Barrett, Dyott, Fisher, Thompson, Holland, C. W. Clarke, Norton, Parsloe, Jr., Holman, Charles Mathews, Setchell, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Russell (now Mrs. Hoey), Mrs. Skerrett, Mrs. Rea, Miss Raymond, Mrs. Hough, Mrs. Buckland, Miss Weston, Miss Devlin, Miss Malvina, Miss Agnes Robertson, Fanny Wallack, Mary Taylor, Miss Chapman. This is by no means intended as a complete enumeration—"but 't is enough, 't will serve." Many names have been forgotten, and some remembered but omitted. It may be of interest to note at this point the fortunes that awaited at least five of the actresses above named—

viz.: Mrs. Russell, Miss Weston, Miss Devlin, Miss Malvina, Miss Agnes Robertson.

Mrs. Russell, while at Burton's in 1849, and a great favorite, was married to John Hoey of express fame, and shortly thereafter retired from the stage, the manager doing the honors at her farewell, and presenting her on the occasion with a valuable testimonial of his regard. Long afterward Mrs. Hoey was induced by the elder Wallack to forsake her retirement, and for many years was the leading lady at his theatre, her refined manners, correct taste, and exquisite toilets, exciting anew public esteem and admiration. She quitted the stage and returned to private life in 1865.

Miss Lizzie Weston, whose beauty, dramatic aptitude, and versatility, won nightly plaudits, and whose performance was not without much that was highly meritorious, signalized a career more or less checkered by uniting her fortunes with those of the late Charles Mathews, during his starring tour in 1858, and is now the widow of that famous actor.

Miss Malvina, a sister of Mrs. Barney Williams, was a *danseuse* at Burton's,—for it was the fashion in the old days to beguile the lazy time between the pieces with a Terpsichorean interlude; and we remember but one instance of her appearance in any other character, and that was a minor part in the farce of "A School for Tigers." She became Mrs. Wm. J. Florence in 1853, and has since shared her husband's fortunes and honors. Miss Agnes Robertson made her début in New York at the Chambers Street Theatre, October 22, 1853, as *Milly* in "The Young Actress," and has since been well known as the wife of Dion Boucicault.

A more illustrious alliance—so soon to end in piteous sorrow—was the portion of Mary Devlin. She was a minor actress at Burton's, but a woman of rare and lovely character. So much so, that she won the heart of Edwin Booth, and became his wife, and the idol of his home, till death early called her from his side. It was in memory of this sweet and gentle lady, that the poet Thomas William Parsons penned the following exquisite stanzas:

"What shall we do now, Mary being dead,
Or say, or write, that shall express the half?
What can we do but pillow that fair head
And let the spring-time write her epitaph?

"As it will soon in snow-drop, violet,
Wind-flower, and columbine, and maiden's tear,—
Each letter of that pretty alphabet
That spells in flowers the pageant of the year.

"She was a maiden for a man to love,
She was a woman for a husband's life,
One that had learned to value far above
The name of Love the sacred name of Wife.

"Her little life-dream, rounded so with sleep,
Had all there is of life—except gray hairs:
Hope, love, trust, passion, and devotion deep,
And that mysterious tie a Mother bears.

"She hath fulfilled her promise and hath past:
Set her down gently at the iron door!
Eyes! look on that loved image for the last:
Now cover it in earth—her earth no more!"

Let us now summon, as first in order, the name that heads the list of the actors above given. Henry Placide enjoyed in public estimation a fame worthy and well deserved. He was an actor of the old school, and his conceptions were the fruit of appreciative and careful

study; his acting was a lucid and harmonious interpretation of his author; and his elocution, clear and resonant, was the speech of a scholar and a gentleman. The artistic sense was never forgotten in his delineations, and his name on the bills was a guaranty of intellectual pleasure. He was not broadly funny like Burton, or Holland; but those who remember his *Sir Harcourt Courtley*, his *Jean Jacques François Antoine Hypolite de Frisac*, in "Paris and London," and his *Clown*, in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," will not deny that he was the owner of a rich vein of eccentric humor, and that he worked his possession effectually. He was an expert in the Gallic parts where the speech is a struggle between French and English, and, indeed, since his departure they, too, have vanished from the stage. But those who saw him as *Haversac*, in "The Old Guard"; as *The Tutor*, in "To Parents and Guardians"; or as *Monsieur Dufard*, in "The First Night," will bear witness to his inimitable manner, and to his facile blending of the grave and gay.

We shall never forget how, in the last-named character (*Mons. Dufard*), having engaged his daughter for a "first appearance," and having declared his own ability to manage the drum in the orchestra on the occasion, he, suddenly, during the mimic rehearsal, at an allusion in the text to sunrise, stamped violently on the stage; and to the startled manager's exclamation of "What 's that!" serenely replied: "Zat ees ze cannon vich announce ze brek of day—I play him on ze big drum in ze night." In choleric old men Placide was unsurpassed. All the touches that go toward the creation of a grim, irascible, thwarted, bluff old gentleman, he commanded at will. His *Colonel Hardy*, in "Paul Pry," for instance, what an example was that! I hear him, now, at the close of the comedy, when things had drifted to a happy anchorage—hear him saying in reply to the soothing remark: "Why, Colonel, you 've every thing your own way,"—"Yes, I know I have every thing my own way; but —— it, I hav' n't *my own way* of having it!" His rep-

ertory covered a wide range; and we retain vivid recollections of his *Sir Peter Teazle*, his *Doctor Ollapod*, and his *Silky;* the last in "The Road to Ruin," in which comedy, by the way, we remember seeing Placide, Blake, Burton, Lester, Bland, and Mrs. Hughes; truly a phenomenal cast.

Such, briefly sketched, was the actor who constituted one of Burton's strongest pillars. For some years he played at no other theatre in New York. He gave enjoyment to thousands, and in dramatic annals his name and achievements have distinguished and honorable record. As one of the many who remain to own their debt of pleasure and instruction, the present writer pays this tribute to the genius and memory of Henry Placide.[1]

We now summon another name from the famous corps, for the purpose of analysis, since

[1] "When Edwin Forrest was in Europe on a visit, he was asked whom he deemed the best American actor; he promptly and unequivocally replied: 'Henry Placide is unquestionably the best general actor on the American boards, and I doubt whether his equal can be found in England.'"—HENRY DICKINSON STONE'S "Theatrical Reminiscences."

we should be ill content with the cold respect of a passing glance at an artist so celebrated as was William Rufus Blake. We can recall no actor of the past, and we know of but one in the present, comparable with Blake in certain lines of old men—certainly in the rôle of tender pathos like *Old Dornton*, and in the portrayal of a sweetly noble nature framed in venerable simplicity, as in *Jesse Rural*, he had no equal; and it is simply truth to say that with him departed from the stage that unique, all-affecting, wondrous embodiment of *Geoffrey Dale*, in "The Last Man."

The characteristics of Blake's power were a broad heartiness, suggestive sentiment, and eloquent idealization. These traits informed respectively the parts he essayed, and gave to each in turn rare flow of spirit, richness of color, and poetic fervor. For the verbal expression of these salient elements, he possessed a tuneful voice, which rose or fell as the sway of feeling dictated, and his delivery was singularly felicitous in tone and

emphasis. Nor was he lacking in a humor at once subtle and delicate, happily evinced in his acting of *Mr. Primrose*, in the comedietta of "Bachelors' Torments."

Those who saw Blake at the period of which we are writing, found it hard to believe that the *Sir Anthony Absolute* of aldermanic proportions before them was once a slender young man and played light comedy! Yet so it was. Very old play-goers will recollect the Chatham Garden theatre, and perhaps some tenacious memory bears record of having seen Blake there in the long ago; for there he first appeared to a New York audience, in 1824, playing *Frederick*, in Colman's "Poor Gentleman." We never saw him earlier than at Burton's, and then with added years had come a rotundity of person which, however unobjectionable in the famous impersonations of his prime, was not, it must be confessed, the ideal physique of light comedy; so his *Frederick* had long departed and his *Sir Robert Bramble* had appeared.

The first time we saw Blake was in "The Road to Ruin," and the impression he made has never been effaced. We were young, it is true, and sentimental, and easily moved; but our heart tells us that the effect would be the same could we see the actor in the play to-morrow. We have read since of the extraordinary sensation produced by the great Munden in the part of *Old Dornton*; but we have an abiding faith that the acting of the famous Englishman would have been no revelation to Blake; and we cannot, indeed, conceive of any added touch that would not have impaired, rather than heightened, the latter's superb delineation. But Blake's portrayal of the outraged, doting, fond, tender father, is, like his *Jesse Rural*, so fresh in the memory of living persons, that we feel it to be needless to descant upon its beauties. Few will forget the years of his last and long engagement at Wallack's—a fitting crown for a great artistic career. Blake played many parts and rarely touched but to adorn. Even his *Malvolio*, had it not

been for the advent of Charles Fisher (who was born in yellow stockings and cross-gartered), would have passed into history as a carefully conceived and highly finished performance. Whenever we see Mr. John Gilbert we are reminded of Blake. There is a grace of action, a courtliness of manner, inseparable from Gilbert, which lends to all his efforts an elevating charm, a feature Blake did not possess in like degree. But the two actors belonged to the same school; their traditions will be much akin; and neither loses in being spoken of in the same breath, and with the same accent of admiration.

Following Placide and Blake is the name of an actor better remembered than either, and whose death is of comparatively recent date. We refer to John Brougham, who for thirty years and more was one of New York's prime favorites, and his name is associated with many of the drama's brightest and worthiest triumphs. His inexhaustible flow of spirits, in his best days, pervaded all his acting, and in-

vested the most unattractive part with an alluring charm, as many a prosaic spot in nature becomes enchanted land by the music of falling waters. Add to this exuberant vitality a rich endowment of mother wit; a bright intelligence; keen sympathy and appreciation, and rare personal magnetism, and you have before you "glorious John," whose hearty voice it was always a pleasure to hear, and whose face, beaming with humor, was always welcomed with delight.

Brougham was Burton's stage manager in 1848, and his dramatization of "Dombey and Son" was first produced in that year. The representation of this play established the Chambers Street Theatre, drew attention to the talents of the stock company, and put money into Burton's purse. If theatres, like other things, succeed either by hook or crook, as the saying is, surely it was by hook that the manager won fame and fortune, for the digit of *Captain Cuttle* held sway like a wizard's wand. The temptation to dwell here on this renowned

MR. BURTON AS CAPTAIN CUTTLE

Burtonian impersonation is hard to resist; but we must be patient and bide our time.

Brougham played *Bunsby* and *Bagstock*, investing the oracular utterances of the tar, and the roughness and toughness and "devilish" slyness of the *Major*, with a humor and spirit all his own. We laugh outright as we think of that scene where *Cuttle* is being rapidly reduced to agony and despair by *Mrs. MacStinger*, and is rescued therefrom by *Bunsby*, who, with a hoarse "Avast, my lass; avast!" advances solemnly on the redoubtable female, and with a soothing gravity ejects the entire *MacStinger* family, following in the rear himself —*Cuttle* meanwhile gazing in speechless astonishment at the unexpected succor, until the door is closed; and then, drawing an immense breath, and turning toward the audience his inimitable face, exclaims in a tone of profound respect and admiration: "There 's wisdom!"

It was a great treat to see Burton and Brougham together. The two actors were so ready, so full of wit, so alive to each other's

points and by-play, that any fanciful interpolation of the text, or humorous impromptu, by the one, was instantly responded to by the other; and the house was often thrown into convulsions of merriment by these purely unpremeditated sallies. This was notably the case in the afterpiece of "An Unwarrantable Intrusion"—committed by Mr. Brougham upon Mr. Burton—when in the tag the comedians suddenly assumed their own persons, and, addressing each other by their proper names, engaged in a droll colloquy respecting the dilemma of having nothing to say to conclude the piece; and each suggesting in turn something that ought to or might be said to an audience under such peculiar and distressing circumstances,—the audience meanwhile in a state of hilarious excitement, drinking in every sparkling jest and repartee, and wishing the flow of humor would last forever.

And here we are reminded of an incident not down in the bills, which furnished an audience with an unlooked-for and affecting episode. It

occurred during the performance of Colman's comedy of "John Bull," produced for the benefit of a favorite actor; Burton playing *Job Thornberry*, and Brougham, who had volunteered for the occasion, appearing in his capital rôle of *Dennis Brulgruddery*. Brougham was no longer with Burton—an estrangement existed between them of which the public was aware—and the conjunction of the two actors naturally awakened a lively interest. It chances in the comedy that *Mary Thornberry* finds a refuge in her distress at the "Red Cow," and is greatly befriended by *Dennis*. Her father, discovering her there, and grateful for the service rendered, exclaims: "You have behaved like an emperor to her. Give me your hand, landlord!" Now, in the play, the reply of *Dennis* is: "Behaved!—(*refusing his hand*)—Arrah, now, get away with your blarney,"—but Brougham paused for a moment before Burton's outstretched hand, and then, as if yielding to an impulse, stretched forth his, and the two actors stood with clasped hands amidst an

outburst of applause that fairly shook the building. Of course they were "called out" at the close, and Brougham, in the course of a felicitous little speech, remarked—alluding, perhaps, to the success of his Lyceum not being all he could wish—that he had "lately run off the track"; to which Burton, in his turn, responded by saying: "Mr. Brougham says he has 'run off the track.' Well, he *has* run off the track; but he has n't burst his boiler yet!" At this speech the enthusiasm of the audience knew no bounds; and indeed, with the exception of Mary Taylor's farewell benefit, we can recall no theatrical occasion where more genuine feeling was manifested.

But to return to "Dombey and Son." Mrs. Brougham was the original *Susan Nipper*, and played the part acceptably; but all previous *Nippers* suffered eclipse when Caroline Chapman appeared at a later date, giving us a *Susan* that seemed to have sprung full-*Nippered* from the head of Boz himself. Her inimitable acting and ring of delivery were like a new light

turned on the scene. Her flow of spirit and alert movement, her independent air and saucy glance, her not-to-be-put-down-under-any-circumstances manner,—all was freshness and sparkle, and her presence was as welcome to the audience as a summer shower to drooping wayside flowers. Miss Chapman was a great acquisition to Burton's, and her bright individuality shone in all her assumptions. Her line was the stage soubrette, a specialty which she lifted entirely out of the commonplace and informed it with force and distinction. It is a pleasure to place on record the memory of happy hours that we owe to the performances of Caroline Chapman.

The original *Toots* was Oliver B. Raymond, whom we never saw. T. B. Johnston was his successor, and as that admirable comedian never did any thing unacceptably, his *Toots* was a memorable effort; and had *Uriah Heep* not followed we should have been satisfied with his *Toots;* but when "Copperfield" was produced and Johnston appeared as *Heep*, it

seemed as if he was born for that and nothing else. Now that we think of it, it seems to us, as we recall Johnston, that nature had peculiarly fitted him for the delineation of many of Dickens's characters. Something in his spare figure, his grotesqueness of demeanor, his whimsical aspect, his odd manner of speech, continually suggested a flavor of Boz; and whether as *Toots*, or *Heep*, or *Newman Noggs*, he seemed to have glided into his element, and was *en rapport* with the great novelist.

We must not forget, in writing of "Dombey and Son," to note how much its attraction was enhanced by the assumption, in 1849, of the part of *Edith* by Mrs. Josephine Russell (the present Mrs. Hoey). Laurence Hutton, referring to the event in his volume of "Plays and Players," says: "Up to the time of her assumption of the rôle, *Edith*, in Brougham's version of the story, was comparatively a secondary part, and one to which but little attention had been paid either by performer or audience. Mrs. Russell, however,

by her refined and elegant manner, brought *Edith* and herself into favor and prominence. She made of *Edith* more than Brougham himself ever imagined could be made; and *Edith* made her a reputation and a success on the New York stage, which, until her honorable and much-to-be-regretted retirement, she ever sustained.[1]

We have dwelt thus on "Dombey and Son," because, in the first place, it gained for the Chambers Street Theatre an enduring public regard, and was no doubt the incentive to the after-production of dramatizations of Dickens, which gave us Burton in *Micawber*, *Squeers*, *Mr. Bumble*, and *Sam Weller;* and because in so celebrating it we pay a deserved tribute to Brougham, from whose fertile brain and ready pen it came. We may say, in this connection, that not only as actor, but as playwright also, Brougham achieved fame and honor. Many of his comedies are well known to the stage,

[1] The first appearance of Mrs. Russell (whose maiden name was Shaw) in Chambers Street was made September 3, 1849.

and are included in the published drama; and as a writer of burlesque we question whether any thing better or funnier than his "Po-ca-hon-tas or the Gentle Savage" has ever been composed. Of one thing we are certain: an incarnate pun-fiend presided over its creation. This extravaganza, first acted at Wallack's Lyceum, took the town by storm, and its bons-mots, local hits, and trenchant witticisms, were on the lips of everybody. In structure, idea, and treatment of theme, it was ludicrous to a degree. Who does not remember Brougham and the late Charles Walcot in their respective parts of *Powhattan* and *Captain Smith?*

It goes without saying that Brougham's Hibernian delineations were perfect and to the manner born. Many an Irish farce we recall, during his stay at Burton's, to which he gave a new lease of life; and we congratulate ourselves that our memory holds record of having once seen him as *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, the only cast in our experience wherein Sheridan's creation found a fitting representative.

We now pause before an actor of illustrious lineage; of a name honored in dramatic annals by encomiums bestowed only upon abilities of the highest order; an actor who, conscious of his inheritance of genius, worthily perpetuates the traditions of his house; and who is now, despite the flight of time, the most engaging and accomplished comedian known to the American stage. Our readers will need no further introduction to Lester Wallack, the "Mr. Lester" of Burton's, where first we saw him so many years ago. We recall the evening when we sat in the cosy parquette, awaiting with eager interest the rising of the curtain on Charles Dance's comic drama of "Delicate Ground," in which Mr. Lester would make his "first appearance since his return from England" (so the bill ran), in the character of *Citizen Sangfroid.* We say eager interest, for we had heard much of Mr. Lester: that he was graceful, handsome, *distingué*,—in fact, splendid generally; and our expectancy was akin to that of the watching astronomer—

"When a new planet swims into his ken."

At last the tinkle of the bell; the curtain rose, and enter Miss Mary Taylor, the universal favorite, as *Pauline*. Her soliloquy closes with the cue for *Sangfroid's* entrance, and at the words, "Hush! my husband!" a pause succeeded—and then from "door left" was protruded an elegantly booted foot, and a moment later Lester stood before us, bowing with characteristic ease and grace to the demonstrations of welcome. We confess to an unconditional surrender on that occasion. The actual fact was far beyond any expectation or hope. We thought we had never seen any one quite so splendid; and *Sangfroid* was forthwith invested with the best and noblest elements that combine to elevate mankind. We endeavored for many days afterward to conform our daily life to the general teachings of *Sangfroid;* we imitated the gait and manner, the calm aplomb of *Sangfroid;* the accent of *Sangfroid* was impressed on all our ordinary forms of speech; our conversation on whatever topic was plenti-

fully sprinkled with *Sangfroidisms;* in short, the whole tenor of our existence was shaped and directed by *Sangfroid* in the person of Mr. Lester. We recovered in due course from our abject submission to the spell of *Sangfroid;* but Lester continued to stretch forth the "sceptre of fascination," and to his matchless grace and finish we owe many a delightful recollection.

Then in early manhood,[1] the unrestrained alertness and vivacity of youth were his in bounteous measure. He was in the *Percy Ardent* and *Young Rapid* period, and had not yet entered the corridor of years at the far end of which lurked the *blasé* figure of "My Awful Dad." We remember him in so many parts which in all likelihood he never will play again! There was *Rover*, in "Wild Oats," that buskined hero, with his captivating nonchalance dashed with tragic fire; his tender conversion of *Lady Amaranth*—played, be it said, with all proper

[1] Lester Wallack's first appearance in New York was made at the Broadway Theatre, Sept. 27, 1847, as *Sir Charles Coldstream* in "Used Up."

demureness by Miss Lizzie Weston; his triumph over *Ephraim Smooth*—one of Blake's instances of versatility—in a scene rich with the spirit of frolic abandon; and his humorous tilt with *Sir George Thunder*—a belligerent sea-dog, played by Burton as he alone could play it—an episode replete with comic power; —all these contributed to a performance which we revelled in many and many a night; and the memory of it, now as we write, draws near in a succession of vivid pictures. There was *Tangent*, in "The Way to Get Married," a capital part in Lester's hands, blending manly action and debonair grace with that easy transition to airy farcical expression, a favorite and effective dramatic habit of this actor, and given full play in that memorable prison scene in the comedy, when, a victim to adverse circumstances, and actually fettered, he makes felicitous use of his handkerchief to hide his mortification and his chains from the eyes of the heroine during her visit of sympathy. *Percy Ardent*, in "The West End," was another of

his characteristic assumptions in those days; so also were *Young Rapid*, in "A Cure for the Heartache," and the *Hon. Tom Shuffleton*, in "John Bull"; and, indeed, Burton's frequent revivals of the old comedies would have been a difficult matter without Lester; for in every one of them a light comedy part is distinctly drawn, and unquestionably the rarest among all dramatic artists is the first-class light comedian.

Let any one who thinks otherwise endeavor to recall the names of those who have been or are famous in that special line, and he will be surprised to find how few he can enumerate. One might suppose that all young actors would naturally incline toward light comedy, and be ambitious in that direction, since in that sphere are found the charm of youth, the expression of lofty sentiment, the impulse to chivalrous action, the opportunity for the display of graceful and manly bearing,—not to mention the lover, whom, as Emerson declares, all the world loves: and why then, one may ask,

should there not be always a plentiful crop of ripening light comedians? Alas, it is not enough to be young, good-looking, intelligent, and of virtuous impulse, or even a lover. Something more is needed, and we conceive it to be that gift of nature, which study and practice develop into seeming perfect art, but which neither study nor practice can create; the gift, let us say, of perceiving instinctively the salient points of a character, and going beyond the author in felicitous and suggestive expression of them. It is easier, we think, to compass tragedy; easier to simulate age; easier to be funny; than to be at once airy and gay, delicately humorous, and engagingly manly. There are fewer light comedians born,—that is the whole story; and where we find one actor like Lester Wallack, we meet with plenty of every other specialty. This was made strikingly evident by Burton's experiments in supplying Lester's place, when the latter joined his father in the establishment of Wallack's Lyceum. Charles Fisher was im-

ported, and he for a season essayed to succeed Lester; but

> "The expectancy and rose of the fair state"

he was not, and it was not long before the fiddle of *Triplet* and the yellow stockings of *Malvolio* emancipated him from the bondage of light comedy, revealed his true powers, and made us grateful to Burton for introducing to New York one of the best eccentric comedians of the day. Dyott, Norton, and even Holman, were severally thrown into the breach, such was the strait in which the manager found himself; and it was not until he secured George Jordan that equilibrium was restored to the company.

But to return. The versatility of Lester, so conspicuous throughout his career, was early made apparent. We remember him as *Steerforth*, as *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, and *Captain Murphy Maguire;* and though in the last he acted under the shadow of Brougham's rich impersonation, still he was a delightful *Captain*. We saw him as the young lover, in

"Paul Pry"; as *Frederick*, in "The Poor Gentleman," and many more; besides those parts, such as *Young Marlow*, *Charles Surface*, and *Captain Absolute*, which need no reference, since they remain ripe and finished conceptions in his present repertory. But of all his delineations of the past, that which we linger on with the greatest pleasure, and which affected us most, was his *Harry Dornton*, in "The Road to Ruin." From the moment he appears beneath his father's window, importunate for admittance, he awakens an interest and sympathy that follow him to the end. The part abounds in touches of Lesterian hue and flavor: the scene just mentioned; that wherein *Milford* makes careless and heartless allusion to *Old Dornton*, and is met by *Harry's* eloquent and electric rebuke; the scene with the *Widow Warren*, and with *Sophia*;—all are charming; and we feel it to be no small tribute to hold in memory Lester's *Harry* side by side with the *Old Dornton* of Blake.

We have spoken of T. B. Johnston, and re-

ferred to famous parts of his, particularly to the conception and execution of certain characters in Dickens which undeniably he made his own; but we remember this actor in other and sundry enjoyable delineations, of which brief mention may be made. The odd aspect of Johnston, joined to his whimsical method, so in keeping, as before remarked, with the creations of Boz, peculiarly fitted him for the apt portrayal of those idiosyncrasies of nature and temperament shadowed forth by characters in many of the old farces, in which he often appeared, those pieces being quite the fashion in the days of which we are writing. We may instance *Panels*, in "A School for Tigers," as one of these; his part in "A Blighted Being" (the name quite forgotten), was another; *Humphrey Dobbins*, in "The Poor Gentleman" (that not a farce, however), was a capital portraiture, and an amusing foil to Burton's *Sir Robert Bramble;* his *Miss Smithers*, in "A Thousand Milliners," where he almost divided the honors with Burton as *Madam Vander-*

pants ;—these are a few of the many that come floating back on the tide of recollection.

Bland was a useful member of Burton's company, though we think his stay was brief, and he contributes less to memory, as it chances, than many others. We never regarded him as a great actor, though we have read of his being thought the best *Jacques* of his day, and very fine as *Sir Thomas Clifford.* We never saw him in either, and have no recollection of "The Hunchback" being produced at the Chambers Street Theatre. In "The Honeymoon" Burton himself was the *Jacques.* We remember Bland very well as *Sulky*, in "The Road to Ruin," and as *Ham*, in "David Copperfield," and both efforts were creditable and contributed to the general success—his share in the exciting and touching scenes between *Old Dornton* and himself, as *Sulky*, being admirably done.

We are surprised that we remember so little interesting to record of Jordan. Succeeding Lester, and deemed by many the peer of that

comedian, one might naturally suppose that his achievements would figure largely in these reminiscences; but we can recall very few impersonations of which we retain a vivid impression. We cannot concur with that estimate of his powers which ranked him with Lester, yet we cordially admit that he came nearer than any actor we know of. He was very handsome, had a fine stage presence, and was agreeable in all that he did. We recall his spirited performance of *Rover;* his *Kitely*, in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in His Humor"; his *Ferdinand*, in "The Tempest"; his *Lysander*, in "Midsummer Night's Dream"; and his *Captain Hawksley*, in "Still Waters Run Deep," was superb and unequalled. It was always a pleasure to see Jordan, and we owe to his acting many an hour of enjoyment.

George Barrett—or, "Gentleman George," as he was quite as well known—was one of Burton's company for a short period, and with his name are associated many pleasant memories. Among them we may mention with de-

light his performance of *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, a companion picture to Fisher's *Malvolio*. His long body and attenuated "make up," his piping voice, his fantastic manner, and absurd assumption of acumen,—all contributed to an embodiment artistic and entertaining in the highest degree. He also played *Flute*, the Bellows-Mender, in the revival of "Midsummer Night's Dream"; and it seems but yesterday, so vivid is the remembrance, that we saw him stalking about the stage, in the guise of Ben Jonson's bombastic hero, *Captain Bobadil*.

Old play-goers, if they remember nothing else of John Dyott, will recollect his admirable reading—his distinct utterance—his fine emphasis,—qualities specially noticeable in his Shakespearian assumptions and in characters of a didactic cast; and which made acceptable many a part he undertook, half redeeming it from deficiencies consequent upon natural unfitness. It was such a pleasure to listen to his delivery of the text, that you overlooked or

pardoned inadequacy of treatment in other respects. Necessarily his impersonations were of very unequal merit. Certain phases of the character assumed might be justly conceived and well executed; others manifestly lacking in the expression of what was naturally suggested, or sufficiently obvious. We might cite instances of this—*Claude Melnotte* or *Alfred Evelyn*, for example; but we prefer to think of him in his most agreeable aspects, which were not conspicuous in light comedy, though that rôle, under the stress of exigency, often fell to his lot.

We pleasantly recall him as *Lieut. Worthington*, in "The Poor Gentleman"; as *Peregrine*, in "John Bull"; as *Penruddoch*, in "The Wheel of Fortune"; as *Duke Orsino*, in "Twelfth Night"; as *Master Ford*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor"; and others that might be mentioned. He was a useful member of the Chambers Street company, acted always with intelligence and spirit, and, though leaving no great name, deserves re-

membrance as a finished reader and conscientious artist.

Charles Fisher, well known to the present generation of play-goers as a sterling comedian, came to Burton's after Lester's withdrawal, and, as previously remarked, succeeded that actor as the exponent of light comedy. We saw him in several characters of that order; but it must be confessed that his efforts, however praiseworthy, were not such as to induce a condition of complacency on the part of the management, with regard to his capacity in that direction. But the whirligig of time, as Shakespeare tells us, brings on its revenges; and in due course Mr. Fisher had his, and a truly artistic one it was.

It came about on the second revival of "Twelfth Night," and was achieved in the part of *Malvolio*. In referring to Blake's assumption of this character, we observed, in passing, that Fisher was born in yellow stockings and cross-gartered—meaning to express the natural affinity for Shakespeare's creation

existing in the actor; and we believe there will be no question among those who remember the impersonation, as to the subtlety of conception, the felicity of portrayal, and fidelity to detail, that so eminently distinguished it. From first to last it was a masterpiece. His manner when he interrupts the orgies of *Sir Toby*, the *Clown*, and *Aguecheek*, and during their maudlin mockery, was full of rare suggestiveness; the great scene in the garden, where he falls into the trap set by *Maria*, was one of the finest pieces of acting known to our stage. The audience were as intent during its progress as if their own lives and fortunes hung upon that enigmatic letter. When it comes home to him at last that he indeed is the favored of *Olivia*, and he gives full rein to his fancy respecting his future exaltation—how he must bear himself, the lofty air he will assume, the consideration he will extort,—he was inimitable. Already he is clothed in yellow stockings and cross-gartered; and he smiles, as he struts, the smile that his de-

ceiver declares so becomes him. In the ensuing scene before *Olivia*, where the stockings and smiles play so important a part, he was equally fine; and if Fisher had played nothing else, his *Malvolio* would remain an interpretation of the highest class, and a glory of dramatic art. The press, with one accord, united in its praise; and Mr. Richard Grant White, whose ability to judge of Shakespearian delineations was well known, confessed, in the columns of the *Courier and Inquirer* that he did not know where Mr. Fisher learned to play *Malvolio* so well. To say that we enjoyed what we have here endeavored to recall, is to say but little. It is one of our most valued memories—and we could not help thinking, when the lovely *Viola* of the late Miss Neilson was captivating all hearts, what a revelation it would have been to her admiring audience had Fisher presented his picture of *Malvolio*.

In Burton's revival of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," Fisher was cast as *Duke Theseus;* and in thinking of the part, that glorious

passage descriptive of the *Duke's* hounds rings in our ears, as spoken with glowing enthusiasm by the actor:

> "My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
> So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
> Crook-kneed, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
> Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
> Each under each. A cry more tunable
> Was never holloa'd to, nor cheered with horn,
> In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
> Judge when you hear."

In "The Tempest" also, as *Prospero*, Mr. Fisher appeared to advantage, and swayed the destinies of the Enchanted Isle with dignity and effect. *Triplet*, in "Masks and Faces," was another performance of Fisher's that we might linger over in pleasant memory of its humor and pathos; a performance, too, by the way, which brought to public view a new accomplishment of the actor; namely, his acquaintance with the violin,—an advantage that lent unusual force and brilliancy to the capital scene where *Woffington*, having played Lady Bountiful to the forlorn family, completes her

conquest by calling for the fiddle and dancing "Cover the Buckle." And with the tune in our ears, and a vision of Fisher's elbow in deft movement, we take leave of the actor who gave us in the past so many happy hours.

An artist of quite another sort was Lysander Steele Thompson. He was an importation of Burton's; and his specialty was the Yorkshireman of the stage, a line in which he stood alone and unapproachable. Actors there have been who played the same parts, and with a sufficient mastery of the dialect to pass muster; but, compared with Thompson's, their assumptions were like artificial flowers in a painted vase beside a clump of spring violets in the dew of morning. The semblance was there; but the delicious fragrance of nature's breath it was not theirs to give. The native freshness and out-of-door breezy spirit were Thompson's own and born with him. His engagement was followed by the production of all the known plays in which there was a *Zekiel Homespun*, or a *Robin Roughhead*. We saw him in them all:

Bob Tyke, in "The School of Reform"; *Zekiel Homespun*, in "The Heir-at-Law"; *Stephen Harrowby*, in "The Poor Gentleman,"—and until the advent of Thompson, the *Harrowby* family had been omitted in Burton's version of the comedy;—*Robin Roughhead*, in "A Ploughman Turned Lord"; *John Browdie*, in "Nicholas Nickleby"; and *Giles*, in "The Miller's Maid"; in which last, indeed, he acted under an inspiration that almost laid claim to genius itself; and we see him now, in that high-wrought scene, where, as the defender of virtue and innocence, he towers in superb wrath above the villain *Gamekeeper*, who would tear from her home the person of *Susan Fellows*.

It goes without saying that his dialect was perfect, and all the humorous phases—the touches of bewilderment and arch simplicity, the quaint retort, the rollicking drollery, the innocence blent with audacity,—all these traits and characteristics were so many gifts of expression summoned and employed at will. We have seen many tragedians and artists in melo-

drama ; many " old men " and light comedians ; many funny men and eccentric actors, but we have seen one Yorkshireman only—Lysander Thompson.

He was not without vanity, however, and possibly aspired to other dramatic walks than his famous specialty, if we may judge from a little episode in his career at Burton's, which really makes too good a story to be lost. Burton had in view the production of " The Merry Wives," in order to act *Falstaff;* and in the distribution Thompson was asked to make choice of a part. The story runs that, after due reflection, Mr. Thompson answered that on the whole he would prefer to play *Sir John.* The manager regarded him for a moment with a glance of wonder, and then: " I'm —— if you do ; one *Falstaff* is enough ; you must choose again, Thompson." And he chose the *Host of the Garter Inn*, and made a palpable hit.

The late Charles Mathews played a short engagement at Burton's ; and we remember his

capital acting in "Little Toddlekins" and as *Young Rapid;* but we need not dwell upon an actor whose stay was so fleeting, whose celebrity was so extended, and whose Memoirs have so recently been given to the public.

George Holland, also departed, was for a brief period at the Chambers Street Theatre, and we recall our enjoyment of his broad fun and facial extravagance. We always felt, however, that—as his line was somewhat akin to Burton's—he underwent a perilous ordeal in appearing on the same stage with the great actor whose genius was so overshadowing.

Messrs. Norton,[1] Holman, and Parsloe, jr.,

[1] An amusing experience may be related apropos of Mr. Norton. Not liking a part in which he was cast, he addressed the following letter to the manager:

"MR. BURTON, My Dear Sir:—It was not necessity which drove me to America. I wished to travel, to see the country, and, after having satisfied myself as to whether it pleased me, professionally or otherwise, to arrange either to remain in it or return to England. I consider myself greatly insulted by being cast for the part of Scaley in 'Nicholas Nickleby.' To offer such an indignity to a gentleman who has held a good position in the Olympic Theatre, London, under the management of so great an actor as Mr. W. Farren, where he has played Sir John Melville, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Sir Arthur Lascelles, etc, I consider a great insult, and positively request

were useful members of the stock company, limited in range and ability; and we mention them as painstaking actors, who always did their best, and aided materially in the general success of the theatre. The name of young Parsloe is included on account of his performance of *Puck*, which, owing to natural cleverness and acrobatic aptitude, he succeeded, under Burton's training, in making exceedingly effective and full of goblin action.

And now let us fancy ourselves sitting, as of old, in the parquette, the curtain having risen

you to take me out of the objectionable cast, and in future to keep to the promise you made on engaging

"Yours, W. H. NORTON."

Shortly he received the following reply:

"MY DEAR MR. NORTON:—When I engaged you I thought you were merely an actor. I find that you are a gentleman on your travels, and I have to apologize for detaining you. If you proceed, let me advise you to visit Niagara about this time. Take a tour through Canada. After that take your way through the country generally, not forgetting the caves of Kentucky, and in mid-winter return to Niagara a splendid sight. But should you feel inclined to defer your travels, W. E. Burton will be happy to retain your services until the close of the season."

"What could I do or say?" said Norton, relating the incident. "I literally roared with laughter. He had beaten me completely. We adjusted the difference, and I remained with him for two seasons."

on "The Serious Family." *Sleek* reads his appeal, and we hear a voice saying: "Those words give comfort to every fainting and world-worn spirit, good Mr. Aminadab Sleek" —and we know that *Lady Sowerby Creamly* has spoken, and that Mrs. Hughes is before us. Of this estimable lady and admirable actress, much more might be said than present space will allow. Almost as familiar a figure as the manager himself, for years she enacted those characters which were peculiarly her forte, and was identified with all the success and shared all the fame of the renowned theatre. We can recall no instance of her having disappointed an audience; and though, in the course of her long service, she may have assumed uncongenial parts, yet so intelligent was she, so thorough, so conscientious, that, in spite of unsuitableness, her performance was always acceptable and meritorious. *Lady Duberly*, in "The Heir-at-Law," *Mrs. Malaprop*, in "The Rivals," *Lucretia McTab*, in "The Poor Gentleman," were her accustomed line, and well

indeed she played them. *Widow Warren*, in "The Road to Ruin," *Mrs. Skewton*, in "Dombey and Son," *Betsy Trotwood*, in "David Copperfied," were kindred felicitous portraitures; and no one can think of Burton as *Sleek* and *Toodle* without instantly associating Mrs. Hughes as *Lady Creamly* and *Mrs. Toodle*. How many times did they play those parts together! In all those lighter pieces and farces Burton made so popular and famous, she was his ally and strong support; and no history of the drama of that period can be written without conspicuous mention of her name; nor can the professional career and triumphs of Burton be recounted without suggestion and remembrance of Mrs. Hughes. Their professional relation was perfectly harmonious, and she was with him to the last. She went with him from Chambers Street to the New Theatre, and when that was given up accompanied him on all his starring tours, acting with him when he appeared for the last time in New York, and when he acted for the last time in

his life at Hamilton, Canada. In a speech Burton once made, he thus referred to their theatrical relations: "I have been her father, her son, her uncle, her first husband, her second husband, and her third husband, her friend, and her disconsolate widower, and I have liked her better and better in each relation!"

Even as far back as 1826 Mrs. Hughes was a great favorite. H. B. Phelps, in his valuable work known as "Players of a Century," gives a notice of the press she received for a benefit night at that period, which he says is worth preserving as a model: "Mrs. Hughes takes her benefit at the theatre to-night. It would be an insult to the generous enthusiasm of her numerous admirers, to say another word on the subject."

As it cannot fail to be of interest to readers of this volume, we copy from Mr. Phelps's book a reply to a letter addressed by him to the Hon. Charles Hughes, State Senator, asking information respecting Mrs. Hughes's subsequent history.

"DEAR SIR:—Mrs. Esther Hughes, formerly Mrs. Young, was my mother. She died upon her farm, three miles from this village (Sandy Hill, N. Y.), on the 15th of April, 1867, at the age of seventy-five, from the effects of an accident (falling down stairs, caused by vertigo). She had left the stage before the war, her last engagement being a travelling tour with W. E. Burton, in the South and North. She was acting in Albany as Mrs. Young when the war of 1812 was declared, and I have often heard her speak of Solomon Southwick and of John O. Cole, who was a boy in Southwick's office. Her many years of theatrical life speak for themselves."

We have heretofore alluded to the Miss Agnes Roberston of long ago; and now a memory steals in upon us of her début at Burton's, and of her enchanting performance in the protean play of "The Young Actress." Of the half dozen parts assumed, the Scotch lassie and the Irish lad still haunt us. The highland fling of the one and the "Widow Machree" of the other were charming to see and hear; and, indeed, Miss Robertson was charming altogether.

We could give a long list of actors and ac-

tresses who from year to year were enrolled in the Chambers Street company, and whose efforts are pleasantly remembered. We do not mean to slight them; but we must hasten toward our appointed goal. One actress, however, a recognized favorite in New York long before her engagement with Burton, which terminated with her farewell to the stage, deserves more than a passing notice, for the pleasure she gave was as pure and healthful as it was winsome and bright. We refer to Miss Mary Taylor—"Our Mary,"—better known and esteemed than any actress of her day, except Charlotte Cushman, that we can recall.

We shall not dwell upon any part of her career, nor examine her dramatic capabilities. She never appeared without eliciting the warmest of welcomes; and when we try to think of the many characters we saw her in, we find ourselves remembering only how sweet and good she was. We were present at her farewell benefit, and during the speech Mr. Burton made for her the emotion throughout the house, at

the thought of parting, was as sincere as it was deep. She stood, visibly affected, in the midst of her companions, and when the curtain fell there was a sigh, as if the audience had lost a friend.

We have endeavored in the foregoing to indicate the strength of the Chambers Street company, and we think the reader cannot fail to be impressed by the exhibit. The fact of such dramatic portraiture being easy, seems to us a striking proof of its supreme excellence. The majority of them were they living now might be comedy stars. When we have Jefferson, Raymond, Fawcett Rowe, Stuart Robson, and Florence, starring about the country, playing their one part hundreds of nights, what shall we think of Burton, Placide, Blake, Brougham, Lester, Johnston, and the rest, appearing together nightly in characters of varied but equal dramatic power? There has been a great change since then. The name of the places of amusement now is legion, and one bright star in the heaven of scenic splendor

consoles the public for the loss of a concentration of wit and genius. As we recall for a moment all that bright array, we are taken back through the maze of distance, and old familiar forms arise; we see the glimmer of accustomed footlights; the scene is alive with well-known faces; we even hear voices that we know; we join in the old-time plaudits—and forget how many years have rolled between! There is no retrospection without its tinge of sadness. "Never to return" is the refrain of human memory. How beautifully Holmes expresses it in "The Last Leaf":

> "The mossy marbles rest
> On the lips that he has pressed,
> In their bloom;
> And the names he loved to hear,
> Have been carved for many a year
> On the tomb."

The years of the Chambers Street Theatre were fruitful in dramatic events. We have already mentioned "Dombey and Son," in 1848; and that signal triumph was followed by "David Copperfield," "Oliver Twist," "Nicho-

las Nickleby," and "The Pickwickians." The immortal *Toodles* was first seen October 2, 1848, and an account of that performance will be found in our Recollections. It became later the custom of the management to present "The Serious Family" and "The Toodles" every Tuesday and Friday in each week, so great was the popularity of those pieces. People came from all parts of the country to see them; parents brought their families and relatives; and one middle-aged couple, a husband and wife, never failed, for successive seasons, to occupy the same seats at every representation. All the old comedies were given in due course, with that perfection of cast to which we have alluded, and those pieces made famous by Burton's acting—such as "The Breach of Promise," "Charles XII.," "Happiest Day of my Life," "Paul Pry," "Family Jars," "Soldier's Daughter," "Charles II.," "How to Make Home Happy," etc., (and which now seem for ever lost,)—were a constant source of joyous pleasure. The wisdom

and good judgment of the manager were conspicuous in the nightly programmes, and it may here be said that no theatrical caterer ever excelled Burton in an acute perception of what was needful to meet the public taste, and in providing the requisite entertainment. To wide experience he added intuitive appreciation of stage effect, and his extensive knowledge of the drama was seen in the disciplining of his forces and in his sagacious distributions. It must not be forgotten that as manager as well as actor Burton shone in the prosperity and fame of his theatre; and it will not be when now we touch on the Shakespearian revivals that lent such beauty, grace, and dignity to his stage, and revealed the manager in the gracious aspect of a profound and reverent student of the mighty dramatist. These revivals were the crowning triumphs of Burton's management. The production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Twelfth Night," "The Tempest," "Winter's Tale," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," marked an era in

theatrical representation, for up to that time no attempt had been made so ambitious ; and the success that attended the enterprise was in all respects richly deserved. "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in particular, won universal admiration. The fairy portion was so beautiful ; the play before the duke so capital ; that Shakespeare's creation acted upon the public like a revelation, and heart and mind felt the glow of a new sensation. The notices of the press were so unqualified in their praise of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," that they were gathered and issued in a pamphlet as a tribute to the achievement. The effect of the succeeding revivals was similar in kind, and the people marvelled at the resources of a management that on so limited a stage could produce such wonderful results. And with these plays of Shakespeare came the impersonations of *Nick Bottom*, *Sir Toby Belch*, *Caliban*, *Autolycus*, and *Falstaff*—never to be forgotten by those who witnessed them, and of which a more extended review is given in our Recollec-

tions. It only needed Shakespeare to round the glory of Chambers Street ; after that there were no more worlds to conquer.

Following the years, we find a record of "As You Like It," produced for the benefit of the American Dramatic Fund at the Astor Place Opera-House, January 8, 1850, in which Burton appeared as *Touchstone*, with a cast including Hamblin, Bland, Jordan, Chippendale, Chapman, Miss Cushman, Mrs. Abbott, Mrs. Walcott, and Mrs. J. Gilbert. In the same year he played a short engagement at the Chatham Theatre, and also essayed to revive the old Olympic ; but the division of attraction was of brief duration. His home was in Chambers Street, and there, to borrow from Lord Tennyson, the banner of Burton blew. The usual even tenor of the theatre was varied by new accessions to the company, and by first appearances, and other interesting events. The present Miss Maggie Mitchell appeared June 2, 1851, as *Julia*, in "The Soldier's Daughter"; but we cannot say positively that the occasion was

her stage début. May 3, 1852, was the farewell benefit of Mary Taylor, to which reference has already been made. September 6th of the same year was the date of the "Centenary Festival of the Introduction of the Drama into America," at Castle Garden, and we find Burton figuring in the elaborate and attractive programme as *Launcelot Gobbo*, in "The Merchant of Venice." Miss Agnes Robertson made her New York début October 22, 1853, and November 23d of the same year witnessed the production of "The Fox Hunt," an original comedy by Dion Boucicault, in which Burton appeared as *William Link*. In 1854, that long baronet, Sir William Don, entered upon the scene, and in the same year (December 18th) a benefit to Morris Barnett occurred, on which occasion "The Serious Family" was given with all the honors. Mr. H. A. Perry made his début in 1856, playing *Gossamer*, in "Laugh When You Can," and that actor was also seen as *Leontes*, in "Winter's Tale."

Every summer for several years, during the

recess at Chambers Street, Burton played engagements at Niblo's with a selection from his company, and was seen at that resort in a round of his favorite characters. This was a great boon to strangers visiting the city, and to those whose circumstances kept them in town. It was some consolation to be moved to mirth, and there never was any disaffection in Burton's summer constituency. But the theatrical tide was setting uptown, and the rapid growth of the city counselled a removal to more available neighborhoods; and so, following the current, the manager bid farewell to the scene of so many triumphs, and leased the building originally known as Tripler Hall, calling it the Metropolitan, or, as stated by Ireland, "Burton's New Theatre," where he opened September 8, 1856, with "The Rivals."

The Chambers Street Theatre was opened July 10, 1848, and was closed September 6, 1856. The eight years of its existence are replete with fascinating dramatic history, and are a copious and important contribution to

the annals of the stage. It was the school of many an actor who rose to fame, and the most famous actors of the time were seen upon its boards. It was the birthplace of plays and characters never excelled in their effect upon an audience, and its record is graced by a noble and poetic celebration of Shakespeare's immortal works. And who shall say how many hearts were lightened, and spirits cheered, by the good genius of mirth that presided there?

1856–1860.

It goes without saying that the New Theatre, to those who had been accustomed to the cosiness of Chambers Street, was not *Burton's*. The home feeling so peculiar to the other house could not readily be reproduced in the spacious auditorium of the Metropolitan. The far-reaching stage seemed alien and unreal, and the lofty walls were cold and unfamiliar. There were changes in the company, too; old favorites were missing, and a kindred interest was

not awakened by new-comers. But the manager was there, and with wonted energy began the campaign. The first season was prosperous, and many of the well-known Chambers Street pieces were revived and given with effect. Daniel Setchell made his appearance September 25, 1856, and grew rapidly in public favor. This comedian at a later date essayed the part of *Aminadab Sleek;* but, as Ireland observes, "Burton's *Sleek* alone filled the public mind," and the effort was not encouraged. The Irish comedian, John Collins, was seen about this time, and in November Dion Boucicault and wife opened an engagement. January 13, 1857, Burton played *Dogberry* for the first time in New York, and the same year (May 14th) Edwin Booth appeared at the New Theatre as *Richard III.* It was in this year (October) that Burton was seen in Albany for the first time, playing a round of his famous parts; and it is interesting to note that the present Joe Jefferson, then at Laura Keene's, "during the absence of Burton," to quote Ireland again,

"was recognized as the best low comedian in town." Burton also appeared in Boston for the first time in 1857, opening in *Captain Cuttle*. His reception was so extraordinary in warmth and enthusiasm that he lost control of himself and could not speak for several minutes. This engagement was at the Boston Theatre, and every night the house was crammed. He visited Boston again in 1858, and with the same gratifying success.

It is not impossible that these starring tours suggested to Burton a new and prosperous field of activity, and perhaps some physical symptom dictated relief from the strain and responsibility of management. From whatever cause, after another season of varying fortune, the Metropolitan was given up (1858), and he commenced a starring tour with the highest success, "his name and fame," says Ireland, "being familiar in every quarter of the Union, and more surely attractive than any other theatrical magnet that could be presented."

In conjunction with Mrs. Hughes and a few

MECHANICS' HALL

IMMENSE EXCITEMENT!

SHOUTS OF LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE!

Friday, Dec. 16th.

LAST NIGHT OF THE

GREATEST COMEDIAN OF THE AGE,

MR. W. E.

BURTON!

Acknowledged in England and America UNEQUALLED BOTH AS ACTOR AND MANAGER. He will be aided by the celebrated representative of Matrons,

MRS. HUGHES,

TOGETHER WITH THE

ENTIRE CORPS DRAMATIQUE

From the Royal Lyceum, Toronto, comprising THIRTEEN POPULAR ARTISTES.

NOTICE.

The Engagement is limited to the time announced, and notwithstanding the enormous expense attending it, the following LIBERAL PRICE OF ADMISSION will enable the public to witness a Performance

Not Equalled in the Province or the States.

Admission, - - - 50 Cents.

No extra charge for reserved seats, which can be secured at Nordheimers' Music Store.

Doors open at 7; Curtain rises at a quarter to 8.

Friday Evening, Dec. 16th, 1859,

The Performance will commence with the Comedy, in 3 Acts, by MORRIS BARNETT, Esq., entitled,

The Serious

FAMILY

FAMILY

AMINIDAB SLEEK, - - - Mr. W. E. BURTON.

Performed by him upwards of 600 nights in New York, at Burton's Chamber Street Theatre, Burton's Metropolitan, and Niblo's Theatre.

Lady Sowerby Creamly, - - - Mrs. Hughes.

HER ORIGINAL CHARACTER.

CAPT. MURPHY MAGUIRE	Mr. J. B. FERDON.
CHARLES TORRENS	" P. BYRNE.
FRANK VINCENT	" HALFORD.
DANVERS	" LATHROP.
Mrs. ORMSBY DELMAINE	Mrs. C. T. SMITH.
Mrs. CHARLES TORRENS	ELISE DeCOURCY.
EMMA TORRENS	Mrs. FORRESTER.
GRAHAM	Miss LEWIS.

Guests, Servants, &c.

The Serious Family Polka by the Orchestra.

To conclude with Thos. Bailey Lacy's laughable Farce of

JOHN JONES!

Jerry Goodluck, Esq., - - - Mr. W. E. BURTON.

Mr. MELTON	Mr. NICHOLS.
JOHN JONES	" BYRNE.
COX	" BRUCE.
ELIZA MELTON	Mrs. FORRESTER.
JENNY	Miss MILLER.

VIVAT REGINA.

"SPECTATOR" STEAM PRESS, HAMILTON.

members of his former company, he opened an engagement at Niblo's, July 4, 1859, playing to crowded houses. His last appearance in New York was at the same theatre, on the occasion of his benefit, October 15, 1859, playing *Toodle* in the afternoon, and *Mr. Sudden*, *Toby Tramp*, and *Micawber* in the evening, supported by Mrs. Hughes as *Mrs. Toodle*, *Mrs. Trapper*, and *Betsy Trotwood*. "On the day and evening of his benefit," says Ireland, "more than six hundred persons who had paid for tickets received their money back from the box-office, not being able to obtain admission."

On Saturday, December 3, 1859, Mr. Burton started for Hamilton, Canada, to fulfil an engagement there and at Toronto. A terrible snow-storm was met on the way; the train was blocked; and the delay and discomfort consequent were almost unendurable. While recovering from the exposure and fatigue, Mr. Burton wrote the following letter to his children, and we are kindly permitted to make use of it in this volume. It will be read with interest,

not only for its feeling, but for its graphic vigor of narration and humorous spirit. And we believe it was the last letter he ever wrote.

HAMILTON, CANADA;
Sunday, December 4, 1859.

MY DARLING CHILDREN:

Here I am, in this provincial city of the Western wilderness, snowed up, 500 miles away from my dear home and my precious treasures. Such a day and night as we had yesterday I hope never to go through again. You remember how warm it was on Friday? positively hot; and on the next morning the weather was cold as New Year's, but clear and brisk, and the icy tone of the atmosphere seemed to agree with me. We reached Albany in good order, and started at twelve on the long trip to the Suspension Bridge, over 300 miles, with a light fall of snow, blown about in every direction by a very low sort of a high wind. As we got on our way we found the snow getting deeper, and the flats of the Mohawk River covered with ice. We dined at Utica—a pretty fair meal, with cold plates and Dutch waiters, who looked cold too. When we changed cars at Rochester the wind blew ferociously, and the snow fell heavily, so much so that some fears were expressed

that a drift might form on some part of the road and prevent our progress for a while. At the Suspension Bridge, at half-past twelve in the night, I had to get out of the car and wade ankle deep in snow to the open road beside the baggage-car, and pick out and give checks for our wagon-load of trunks, seeing them safely deposited in another car for transportation into Canada. I thought this was a hard job, but it was nothing to what I had to do in Canada, and really a pleasant little episode compared with my doings hereafter. We crossed the Suspension Bridge within sight of the Falls of Niagara, but we saw them not. The wind howled as we passed over that fearful gulf, and drowned the roaring of the Falls and the rumbling of the rapids as they boiled along some 170 feet below us. I confess that I rejoiced in reaching *terra firma*, even on the cold, inhospitable land of Canada. Well, we thought we were snugly housed for the balance of our journey, some forty-four miles to Hamilton, where we intended to rest for the night (at two in the morning) and pass a cheerful Canadian Sunday in our own rooms looking at the snow, when we were roused from our seats : "Change cars and re-check your baggage." Out we turned, bundles, bags, shawls, top-coat, brandy bottle, cough mixture, papers, books, and growls, leaving behind my old travelling cap, which I have had for

years, and is now gone for ever. When I got out I had to jump into a bed of snow up to my knees, wade a quarter of a mile through the unbroken whiteness to a stand of cars inhumanly situated far from the shelter of the dépôt or the lee of any building whatever. There, in that snow, without any feeling in my feet, the wild wind whistling no end of Verdi overtures with ophicleide accompaniment in the snort of various engines, I had to select my nine packages, see them weighed, have them checked, wait while the numbers of the checks were written down, copied off for me, and a receipt written for the payment imposed on me for extra baggage. If I had not been so miserably perished with cold, I could have felt some pity for the poor officials who had to do all this, not only for me, but for some twenty others, and in the open air too. But it seemed that I had all the baggage in the car. "Who owns 57,467?" "I do." "Why, you have baggage enough for a dozen." And it was so. The nine boxes looked like ninety in the confused atmosphere of steam and drifting snow. "That 's all right, sir." "Then why don't you put the trunks in the baggage car?" "So we will when they have passed the customs" !!!!!!!

Yes, my darlings, at that hour, past midnight, in the open snow-storm, with a wind that killed old *Cuttle's* "What blew each indiwiddiwal hair from

off yer 'ed," in a blinding drift of frozen crystals biting each feature and driving their minute but piercing angles into every pore, I had to wait the presence and the pleasure of Victoria's excisemen, to say whether my baggage might or might not pass duty free into her infernal dominions. I had one cheerful and pleasant thought that filled my bosom with religious delight while I waited. I remembered playing *Harrop* in the drama of "The Innkeeper's Daughter,"—he is an old smuggler, and *shoots the exciseman.* I remembered that when I fired the pistol and the victim dropped, I exclaimed "He 's done for!" and the audience laughed and applauded! Yes, the discriminating public applauded me for killing that exciseman! Oh, was it to do again! How well I could kill that Canadian gauger here, in the snow-storm, at midnight, on the banks of the mad Niagara! Don't be alarmed, darlings. I did n't kill him. He came at last, booted up to his middle, with a Canadian capote and hood, and a leather belt buckled tightly around his waist. But, despite his Canadian costume, the Cockney stuck out boldly all over him. He had a roast-beef-and-porter look, red cheeks, and big English whiskers. Again I had to go over my list, "great box, little box, bandbox, bundle," to the potentate of the tariff. I gave him my honor as a gentleman, etc., and then told him my profession, and, oh! my

loves—oh ! my darling children—what is fame ? *he had never heard of Mr. Burton, the comedian !* Of course, after that, you agree with me that he ought to be killed at once, "without remorse or dread." And he had such an aggravating smell of hot steak and brandy-and-water. Now, I suppose you think that my *Ledger* story of intense interest, describing the agonies of a middle-aged (or more so) individual, is over. Not a bit of it. The fifth act is to come. We were jogging along in the cars, slowly crunching the hard snow on the rails, when we came gradually to a full stop. Presently whisperings were heard, occasional and inquisitive male passengers braved even the fury of the storm, and went abroad to see what was the matter, and in a few minutes we learned that there was a "break in the road." You will ask the meaning of the phrase—so did I, without avail. Gradually the passengers withdrew from the car (we had but one) and I was compelled to look for myself. There had been a collision, or rather an overtaking, for a fast passenger train ran into a freight train, and fearful work they made of it. I went back for Mrs. Hughes and the bags, coats, and books. Heaven knows how we got along, in such a fearful storm, knee-deep in snow and the track full of holes, with a yawning gulf on each side. When at last we reached our place of refuge, we found the car so high off the

rail that it seemed impossible to mount it. Some gentlemen helped Mrs. Hughes in, with such exertions that I expected to see my dear old friend pulled into bits. Then your poor father was left to his fate. I got up—don't ask me how, but when I get home I 'll climb into my bedroom window from the street, to show you how I did it. We had with us in the car an admiring friend from Detroit, who claimed relationship with me because his son married Niblo's niece. Well, we mustered in the car, wet, weary, excited, and chilled to the centre. Oh ! my precious ones, did n't that brandy bottle come in well in that scene ? How I let them smell it, and only smell it ! How I took a drink and smacked my lips, and drank again, and did n't I win the heart of old Niblo's brother's daughter's husband's father by giving him a big drink ? At last we started, slowly, backed into Hamilton at half-past four in the morning, with snow two feet deep in the streets. Half an hour's ride in a dilapidated article of the omnibus genus, and we were dumped at a place a cad called the "Hanglo-American 'Otel," recommended me by Miss Niblo's marital ancestor. A fire in my room, a quiet night's rest, a good breakfast (first-class venison steak), and I feel quite well. My feet were wet. My boots could hardly be pulled off, and in revenge to-day they won't be pulled on. Now am I not a brave old papa to

carry a heart disease and a nervous cough through such scenes?

We are now forty miles from Toronto, whither we proceed at nine in the morning. I hear melancholy doings are prevalent at the place we are bound to, and this deep snow will not make it any better. If business is bad, I shall stay but one week, and go to Rochester for the second week.

I am afraid our plants at Glen Cove were badly hurt by the cold spell coming on so suddenly. I hope this weather has not increased your coughs. My cough is still troublesome, but I am every way better.

May the great God of goodness keep His blessing on all my children; may they keep in health, and in the spirit of love with each other, is the nightly prayer of

Their affectionate father,

W. E. BURTON.

The last appearance of the comedian on any stage was at Mechanics' Hall, Hamilton, Canada, December 16, 1859. He played *Aminadab Sleek* and *Goodluck* in "John Jones." He returned from the trip in an almost exhausted condition, and, after lingering for nearly two months, suffering greatly, died of enlargement

of the heart, February 10, 1860. Mr. Burton left a wife and three daughters, all of whom are living. His remains were interred in Greenwood Cemetery.

The following is a list of parts acted by Mr. Burton, and though probably there are many omissions, it fully justifies Ireland's observation that his repertory was extended almost indefinitely, and "carried into a range, where, if he was sometimes excelled by Placide and Blake, his rivalry was such as to demand every effort on their part to retain their generally acknowledged superiority." It may be mentioned that the parts of *Aminadab Sleek* and *Timothy Toodle* were acted by Burton respectively six hundred and six hundred and forty times.

LIST OF CHARACTERS PERFORMED BY MR. BURTON.

CHARACTERS.	PLAYS.
HOST, FALSTAFF,	in "The Merry Wives of Windsor."
DROMIO,	in "The Comedy of Errors."
DR. OLLAPOD, SIR ROBERT BRAMBLE,	in "The Poor Gentleman."
MUNNS,	in "Forty Winks."

CHARACTERS.		PLAYS.
JOB THORNBERRY,	in	"John Bull."
LAUNCELOT GOBBO,	in	"The Merchant of Venice."
HARROP,	in	"The Innkeeper's Daughter."
BOTTOM,	in	"A Midsummer Night's Dream."
CALIBAN,	in	"The Tempest."
SIR TOBY BELCH,	in	"Twelfth Night."
CAPT. CUTTLE,	in	"Dombey and Son."
TIMOTHY TOODLE,	in	"The Toodles."
AMINADAB SLEEK,	in	"The Serious Family."
VAN DUNDER,	in	"The Dutch Governor."
TRIPLET,	in	"Masks and Faces."
BOB ACRES,	in	"The Rivals."
DR. PANGLOSS, LORD DUBERLY,	in	"The Heir-at-Law."
BILLY LACKADAY,	in	"Sweethearts and Wives."
PILLICODDY,	in	"Poor Pillicoddy."
TOBY TRAMP,	in	"The Mummy."
TONY LUMPKIN.	in	"She Stoops to Conquer."
CHAS. GOLDFINCH,	in	"The Road to Ruin."
JACQUES STROP,	in	"Robert Macaire."
SEPTIMUS PODDLE,	in	"Take That Girl Away."
JEM BAGGS,	in	"The Wandering Minstrel."
SLASHER,	in	"Slasher and Crasher."
JOHN UNIT,	in	"Self."
GREGORY THIMBERWELL,	in	"State Secrets."
BONNYCASTLE,	in	"The Two Bonnycastles."
JEREMIAH CLIP,	in	"The Widow's Victim."
DIMPLE,	in	"Leap Year."
MEGRIM,	in	"Blue Devils."
FELIX FUMER,	in	"The Laughing Hyena."
LA FLEUR,	in	"Animal Magnetism."
TOM RIPSTONE,	in	"Evil Genius."

CHARACTERS.	PLAYS.
TOM NODDY,	in "Tom Noddy's Secret."
SNOBBINGTON,	in "A Good Night's Rest."
PETTIBONE,	in "A Kiss in the Dark."
PAUL PRY,	in "Paul Pry."
JOE BAGS,	in "Wanted 1000 Milliners."
SIR OLIVER SURFACE, SIR PETER TEAZLE,	in "The School for Scandal."
MEDDLE,	in "London Assurance."
THOMAS TROT,	in "Paris and London."
WORMWOOD,	in "The Lottery Ticket."
WADDILOVE,	in "To Parents and Guardians."
SQUEERS,	in "Nicholas Nickleby."
MICAWBER,	in "David Copperfield."
JOHN MILDMAY,	in "Still Waters Run Deep."
SUDDEN,	in "The Breach of Promise."
CALEB QUOTEM,	in "The Review."
PEDRO,	in "Cinderella."
SCHNAPPS,	in "The Naiad Queen."
MR. BUMBLE,	in "Oliver Twist."
PETER SPYK,	in "The Loan of a Lover."
MOCK DUKE,	in "The Honeymoon."
SIR WM. FONDLOVE,	in "The Love Chase."
CODDLE, DOVE,	in "Married Life."
DOMINIE SAMPSON,	in "Guy Mannering."
PETER,	in "The Stranger."
MR. GILMAN,	in "Happiest Day of My Life."
GRAVES,	in "Money."
DUKE'S SERVANT,	in "High Life Below Stairs."
SAM WELLER,	in "Pickwick."
DON WHISKERANDOS,	in "The Critic."
SIMPSON,	in "Simpson & Co."

CHARACTERS.	PLAYS.
TOUCHSTONE,	in "As You Like It."
TOM TAPE,	in "Sketches in India."
TONY BAVARD,	in "The French Spy."
SCRUB,	in "Now-a-Days."
BROWN,	in "Kill or Cure."
FLUID,	in "The Water Party."
NICHOLAS RUE,	in "Secrets Worth Knowing."
MR. FLARE,	in "Such As It Is."
FREDERICK STORK,	in "The Prince's Frolic."
MR. TWEEDLE,	in "The Broken Heart."
GALOCHARD,	in "The King's Gardener."
SNOWBALL,	in "The Catspaw."
WAGGLES,	in "Friend Waggles."
EUCLID FACILE,	in "Twice Killed."
JENKINS,	in "Gretna Green."
BULLFROG,	in "The Rent Day."
BOX,	in "Box and Cox."
MRS. MACBETH,	in "Macbeth Travestie."
CHRISTOPHER STRAP,	in "Pleasant Neighbors."
OLD RAPID,	in "A Cure For the Heartache."
COL. DAMAS,	in "The Lady of Lyons."
VERGES, DOGBERRY,	in "Much Ado About Nothing."
JOHN SMITH,	in "Nature's Nobleman."
EPHRAIM JENKINSON,	in "The Vicar of Wakefield."
MICHAEL,	in "Love in Humble Life."
TETTERBY,	in "The Haunted Man."
MR. MENNY,	in "Socialism."
PIERRE DE LA ROCHE,	in "The Midnight Watch."
SPHINX,	in "The Sphinx."
TOM BOBOLINK,	in "Temptation."
PICADILLY,	in "Burton's New York Directory."

CHARACTERS.	PLAYS.
JUSTICE WOODCOCK,	in "Love in a Village."
BILL,	in "Peep From the Parlor Windows."
HARESFOOT,	in "Life Among the Players."
NOGGS,	in "The Mormons."
MARC ANTONY BAROWN,	in "A Great Tragic Revival."
SIGNOR TOPAZ,	in "Fascination."
VANDAM,	in "Wall Street."
COL. ROCKET,	in "Old Heads and Young Hearts."
VON FIEZENSPAN,	in "The Slave Actress."
JONAS BLOT,	in "The Poor Scholar."
EPAMINONDAS,	in "Genevieve."
ANTHONY GAB,	in "The Witch Wife."
BONUS,	in "Laugh When You Can."
WILLIAM RUFUS,	in "Helping Hands."
COL. GOLDIE,	in "'T is Ill Playing with Edged Tools."
BERRYMAN,	in "False Pretences."
DICK,	in "Ellen Wareham."
SUCKLING,	in "Education."
SPATTERDASH,	in "The Young Quaker."
BOB CLOVER,	in "Married an Actress."
OLD REVEL,	in "School for Grown Children."
GILES GRIZZLE,	in "Stag Hall."
BALTHAZAR,	in "Player's Plot."
WILLIAM LINK,	in "The Fox-Hunt."
BLANQUET,	in "The Lancers."
BRAINWORM,	in "Every Man in His Humor."
MANUEL COGGS,	in "Married by Force."
RATTAN,	in "The Beehive."
GREGORY GRIZZLE,	in "My Wife and Umbrella."
DELPH,	in "Family Jars."
TEWBERRY,	in "A Heart of Gold."
JUPITER,	in "Apollo in New York."

CHARACTERS.	PLAYS.
COUNT VENTOSO,	in "Pride Must Have a Fall."
DR. LACQUER,	in "Our Set."
DE BONHOMME,	in "A Nice Young Man."
SIR HIPPINGTON MIFF,	in "Comfortable Lodgings."
MAXIMUS HOGSFLESH,	in "Barbers at Court."
FRIGHT,	in "Crimson Crimes."
INFANTE FURIBOND,	in "Invisible Prince."
MR. GREENFINCH,	in "Duel in the Dark."
TIMOTHY QUAINT,	in "Soldier's Daughter."
SIR SIMON SLACK,	in "Spring and Autumn."
PEEPING TOM,	in "All at Coventry."
TRISTAM SAPPY,	in "Deaf as a Post."
CODGER,	in "You 're Another."
TACTIC,	in "My Fellow Clerk."
TONY NETTLETOP,	in "Love in a Maze."
TOBIAS SHORTCUT,	in "The Spitfire."
BOB TICKET,	in "An Alarming Sacrifice."
JEREMY DIDDLER,	in "Raising the Wind."
JACK HUMPHREYS,	in "Turning the Tables."
MAW-WORM,	in "The Hypocrite."
DAFFODIL TWOD,	in "The Ladies' Man."
GOLIGHTLY,	in "Lend Me Five Shillings."
CHRISTOPHER CROOKPATH,	in "Upper Ten and Lower Twenty."
GHOST,	in "Hamlet Travestie."
DIGGORY,	in "The Spectre Bridegroom."
BENJAMIN BUZZARD,	in "The Two Buzzards."
MARMADUKE MOUSER,	in "Betsey Baker."
CRACK,	in "The Turnpike Gate."
BILLY BLACK,	in "100-Pound Note."
CAPT. COPP,	in "Charles the Second."
MARALL,	in "New Way to Pay Old Debts."

CHARACTERS.	PLAYS.
TOBIAS SHORTCUT,	in "The Cockney."
PETER POPPLES,	in "Man of Many Friends."
ADAM BROCK,	in "Charles the Twelfth."
RICHARD PRIDE,	in "Janet Pride."
POLONIUS, FIRST GRAVE-DIGGER,	in "Hamlet."
FIRST WITCH,	in "Macbeth."
SIR GEORGE THUNDER,	in "Wild Oats."
GUY GOODLUCK,	in "John Jones."
MARPLOT,	in "The Busybody."
JOE SEDLEY,	in "Vanity Fair."
GIL,	in "Giralda."
QUEEN BEE,	in "St. Cupid."
DABCHICK,	in "How to Make Home Happy."
SHADOWLY SOFTHEAD,	in "Not So Bad As We Seem."
SMYTH,	in "Mind Your Own Business."
SIR TIMOTHY STILTON,	in "Patrician and Parvenu."
CARDINAL MAZARIN,	in "Youthful Days of Louis XIV."
TWINKS,	in "Mrs. Bunbury's Spoons."

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

MR. BURTON'S PERFORMANCES

"*And now what rests but that we spend the time*
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows."

—SHAKESPEARE.

RECOLLECTIONS.

WHEN Burton opened in Chambers Street, he was forty-four years old, in the prime of life, his powers mature and approaching culmination. Let us endeavor to give a portrait of the comedian as he appeared at this time. Above the medium height; rotund in form, yet not cumbersome; limbs well proportioned; deep-chested, with harmonious breadth of shoulder; neck short and robust; large and well-balanced head; the hair worn short behind, longer in front, and brushed smartly toward the temples; face clean-shaven; complexion bordering on the florid; full chin and cheeks; eyes seemingly blue or gray, beneath brows not over heavy, and capable of every conceivable expression; nose straight, and somewhat sharply inclined; mouth large, the

lips thin, and wearing in repose a smile half playful, half trenchant. Such is the picture memory draws, the likeness in some degree confirmed by engravings in our possession. Outlined thus, and in his proper person, he seemed in general aspect to blend the suave respectability of a bank president with the easy-going air of an English country squire. We shall have occasion to refer in due course to the marvellous changes that were possible to that face and form, when the man became the actor and walked the stage with Momus, with Dickens, and with Shakespeare. Prominent among his physical attributes was a clear, strong voice, capable of a great variety of intonations, and his delivery was such that no words of his were ever lost in any part of the house.

Before entering the wide field of our memories, we wish to offer some observations respecting the comedian's mental equipment, and to consider briefly the features of his unrivalled powers. We have no doubt but that

the classical education of his youth had much to do with his early preference for the tragic muse. His mind, imbued with admiration for classic form and color, was fed with divine images, which, while replete with grace and beauty, bore still the impress of Greek austerity. He inclined naturally, therefore, toward the conception of that which was the predominating influence in his mental training. At the same time, after eschewing his predilections for tragedy, he found that the classic discipline had created a receptivity of mind in the highest degree important to his future study ; and that quickened apprehension proved of inestimable value in his subsequent introduction to Shakespeare, the old dramatists, and in all his intellectual excursions.

Yielding to him, then, this vantage-ground of culture, let us glance at the attributes of his genius, which entitle him, as we think, to the claim made for him—namely, one of the greatest actors in his line the stage has known. We need not specify that line further than to say

that it passes with the title of "low comedy"; but Burton's versatility was so extraordinary, his repertory so extended, his conceptions so forcible, that the theatric nomenclature seems insufficient to define and measure the scope and range of his abilities. His impersonations, especially those Shakespearian, were often of too high an order to be classed under the accepted notion of low comedy. Let us style him an expounder and representative of the Humor of the Drama in all its aspects, and we shall come nearer to what he really was. For an all-embracing perception of humor revealed itself perpetually in his acting. As the imagination of Longfellow transformed to organ pipes the musketry of the Springfield Arsenal, so would Burton change dull inanities into vital and joyous images. This informing power, this native faculty of rising superior to the part assumed, and investing it with undreamed-of humorous interest, was an instinct of his genius, and gave to all his embodiments an originality and a flavor peculiarly his own.

The character mattered not. It might be *Nick Bottom* or *Paul Pry*, *Cuttle* or *Micawber*, *Doctor Ollapod* or *Charles Goldfinch*, *Sleek* or *Toodle*. There was the complete identification, the superlative realization of the author's meaning; but the felicitous interpretation, the by-play, the way of saying a thing, the facial expression—his own and no other man's,—the Burtonian touch and treatment. In the extravagance of farcical abandon no one ever was funny as he. In comic portraits like *Toby Tramp* or *Jem Baggs*, he absolutely exhaled mirth; and we cannot help thinking how perfectly Hazlitt describes him in writing of Liston: "His farce is not caricature; his drollery oozes out of his features, and trickles down his face; his voice is a pitch-pipe for laughter." "We have seen Burton," says Wemyss, "keep an audience in roars of inextinguishable laughter, for minutes in succession, while an expression of ludicrous bewilderment, of blank confusion, or pompous inflation, settled upon his countenance." And this was penned by

Wemyss at a time when *Cuttle*, *Micawber*, *Sleek*, and *Toodle* were yet to be.

In thus indicating Burton's natural gifts, we must not lose sight of the study and knowledge necessary to their development and to the achievement of his fame. Let it not be supposed that his famous delineations were so many intuitions, easily shaped and clothed by him into substantial dramatic form. Easy, indeed, they might appear in the handling—for it was characteristic of the great comedian never to seem to entirely expend himself,—he always suggested a reserved force;—but this facile rendering was attained at the expense of as much intellectual attrition as Moore declared the melodious numbers of his verse often cost him.

The late Dr. John W. Francis relates a conversation with the famous George Frederick Cooke, respecting the actor's impersonation of *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*, and in reply to the question, how he acquired so profound a knowledge of the Scotch accentuation, Cooke

said: "I studied more than two and a half years in my own room, with repeated intercourse with Scotch society, in order to master the Scottish dialect, before I ventured to appear on the boards in Edinburgh, as *Sir Pertinax*, and when I did, Sawney took me for a native. It was the hardest task I ever undertook." How do we know how many years of thoughtful application the comedian's masterpieces expressed?

Mr. Burton was a student and man of the world as well as actor, and the supremacy of his performances was due to his close and comprehensive study of his author, his acquaintance with dramatic composition, his artistic sense, his thorough knowledge of the stage, his varied experience, his human insight,—the rest, like Dogberry's reading and writing, came by nature.

It is a habit with old play-goers, when over their cakes and ale, to recall the "palmy days" of the drama, and to say: "Ah, you should have seen ——; he was a great artist—none

equal to him nowadays. Ah, the stage has declined since the old time." We do not wholly believe in the drama's decadence, but as we enter upon our Recollections we feel that *there* were our palmy days, and the years seem long between. Twenty-four have passed since the comedian died, and there has been no sign of a successor to the mask and mantle. And it may be twice—nay, thrice twenty before the actor shall arise who will compel us to recall the triumphs of Burton for the sake of comparison.

MR. BURTON IN FARCE.

A man like Mr. Burton, endowed with keen humorous perception and the mimetic faculty, competent to express easily and with unction every phase of mirthful extravagance suggested by fancy and flow of spirit, must occasionally yield to the imperious demands of his nature, and, perforce, when so pressed, he opens the safety-valve of play and gives escape to his excess of humor.

In this connection, we are reminded of Sydney Smith, as an example of humorous irrepressibility. Restraint seldom fettered the expression of the witty suggestions of his fancy. It was as natural in him to be gay and mirthful as it was to breathe. His humor welled from a perpetual spring. It was like the profanity of the Scotchman who did n't swear at any thing particular, but just stood in the middle of the road and "swore at large." There is a story that the divine, arriving first at a gathering of notables, was ushered into the drawing-room, which was hung with mirrors on all sides. Seeing himself reflected at all points, he looked around and observed: "Ah, a very respectable collection of clergymen!" Now his only auditor was the servant; but the thought came and was at once expressed. Of course, Sydney Smith could be serious when he wished, as all know who are familiar with his life and works; but he had his play-ground at Holland House and in kindred coteries, where his buoyant spirit worked its own sweet will.

When the clergyman of lugubrious aspect called upon poor Tom Hood, the story goes that the humorist could not help remarking: "My dear Sir, I 'm afraid your religion does n't agree with you!"—and we are quite willing to believe the story to be one of "Hood's Own," for it has all the flavor of the author who gave us "Laughter from Year to Year." Instances might be multiplied of this humorous self-abandonment; but we are growing digressive. The train of reflection, however, leads us to the belief that Burton's merry-making powers needed occasionally an avenue of escape; and the safety-valve, in his case, was often found in the farces his acting made so popular—those exhibitions of fun and drollery in which, through the lens of memory, we now intend to view him.

The farce, by the way, is a thing of the past. It may almost be said that as a form of the acting drama, at least in America, it has been passed to the limbo of disuse. Rarely, if ever, do our programmes nowadays bear the

old, familiar formula: "To conclude with the laughable Farce of ——." We are no longer invited to laugh at the droll situations and funny dialogues contained in the many pieces of Buckstone, Mathews, and Morton; yet all will admit their efficacy to beguile a lagging hour, and to smooth away the obtrusive wrinkle from the proverbial brow of care. Such, certainly, was the power they exerted in other days; and perhaps it is to be lamented that the frolic atmosphere diffused by those comic productions is ours no more to make merry and revel in. "Custom exacts, and who denies her sway?" remarks Colman, the younger; and for many years the design of our managers, in catering for the public, has comprehended the representation of one play only for the performance of an evening; setting it elaborately, bestowing upon it a wealth of scenic embellishment, and presenting it generally with a due regard to strength and fitness of cast. Many of the standard comedies have been thus illustrated—notably "The

School for Scandal" and "She Stoops to Conquer"; the comedies of Robertson—"Home," "Caste," "School," "Ours,"—have been so rendered at Wallack's, and at the same theatre that play of charming improbabilities, "Rosedale," has enjoyed a periodic return. "Led Astray," acted so long at the Union Square Theatre; Mr. Daly's many successful adaptations, and the Irish dramas of Mr. Boucicault; "The Two Orphans"; "The Banker's Daughter"; "Hazel Kirke";—all these, and more, are like examples. Mr. Jefferson's "Rip Van Winkle" suffices for an evening; so also does Mr. Raymond's *Col. Sellers*, and so also did Mr. Sothern's *Dundreary*. This new departure may be a very good departure, for it gives us perfection in the details of scenery and costume, and concentrates the managerial resources in one splendid whole; and we may add, that a theatrical system is to be commended when it permits the audience to get comfortably home and to bed before midnight. But, all the same, if Burton were living and

acting, the farce would hold its own; and every auditor would remain to the fall of the curtain, for the last glimpse of that face, the last word and action of that comedian who held such sway over the risibilities of mankind.

If among our readers there should be any old play-goers, they cannot fail to remember how often they dropped in for an hour's hilarity with "The Wandering Minstrel," or "Poor Pillicoddy." For, as previously stated, it was a circumstance by no means unusual to see fresh arrivals lining the walls of the theatre, drawn thither by the potent magnet of Burton in the farce. It was a matter of almost as much consequence to know what afterpiece was on the bill as what comedy. Often, indeed, the effect produced by Burton in some exceptionally droll part had become so widely known, that to see him in it was the prime object of a visit to the theatre; and if to the question — "What does Burton play to-night?" the answer named *Toby Tramp*, *Madame Vanderpants*, or the like, it was

enough: "Let us go!" was the eager exclamation.

What a piece of fun was *Toby Tramp*, in "The Mummy"! How many who are living now will laugh as they recall the appearance of Burton in that close-fitting garment, covered with hieroglyphics! The plot is simple and easily told. *Toby* is an itinerant player, needy and shabby, out at elbow and out of money; and agrees for a cash consideration to personate a mummy, already sold and promised to an old antiquarian. As we think of the scene in which the bargain is concluded we remember how full of stage strut and quotation Burton was, and how he embraced the opportunity to present a specimen of *Toby's* histrionic quality, selecting the familiar soliloquy of *Richard*, and giving it as he (*Toby*) declared Shakespeare ought always to be interpreted. He commenced:

"Now is the winter of our discontent"—

and with the words turned up his coat-collar,

blew his fingers, shivered, and was frozen generally. Continuing then:

> "Made glorious summer by this sun of York"—

he instantly thawed, threw open his coat, puffed, and from his brow wiped the perspiration. And so he went through the whole. At the words "Grim-visag'd war," a gloomy and malignant frown darkened his features, which changed, as he pronounced "hath smooth'd his wrinkled front," to a bland expression of peace;—and the climax was reached when at the lines:

> "He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
> To the lascivious pleasing of a lute"—

he executed a fantastic dance, thrumming the while an imaginary guitar.

This burlesque, for aught we know, may have been an interpolation, a contribution of Burton himself to the fund of merriment—one of the instances, in fact, where he dropped the rein and let Momus have his way. But however it came, the travesty created unbounded

amusement, and put the audience in the best possible humor; yet we feel how pointless is our sketch to even suggest the facial power, the comic attitudes, the air, the touches of drollery, born of the whole scene; and our readers must summon their imagination to help our failure.

The next scene is the antiquarian's museum, and the mummy is brought in. After the necessary raptures consequent upon such a unique possession, the professor withdraws and the stage is left alone. There lies the mummy in his case, and a pause succeeds. The intent audience observe a slight movement in the box. Slowly the head of Burton is raised, and he glances warily around the room. Raising himself to a sitting posture in the case, he turns toward the audience his marvellous face, on which rests an expression of doleful humiliation. We shall never forget how, finally, he rose to his feet, stepped out of the case, walked abjectly to the foot-lights, looked his disguise all over with intense concern, and then turned to the house—by this time scarcely able to

contain itself—and said, with the accent of self-reproach and mortification—"I 'm —— if I 'm not ashamed of myself!"

Situations follow, affording full opportunity for the display of Burton's humorous characteristics; but we need not pursue them in detail. He frightens everybody as a mummy; makes love as a mummy; devours the antiquarian's dinner; has his tragic bursts;—in short, leaves nothing to be desired on the part of those who paid their money to laugh and be jolly with him.

Mad. Vanderpants was another uproarious creation, more laughable even, in some ways, than "The Mummy." *Joe Baggs* (Burton) is a lawyer's clerk, and during the absence of his employer on a journey, arranges a programme of deviltry for himself and comrade (T. B. Johnston). *Baggs* becomes *Mad. Vanderpants*, and his companion *Miss Smithers*, her assistant, and they advertise for "A Thousand Milliners." Burton's "make-up" was one of the most astonishing things we ever saw, and

Johnston's was by no means lacking in artistic finish. The milliners arrive (that is a representation), and then ensues an hour of unparalleled fun and frolic. The manner of Burton in sustaining the character and in replying with complacent air to the numerous questions asked by the deluded damsels, was so supremely ludicrous that we pause in writing to laugh at the remembrance. Some work is wanted, and the window shades are unceremoniously torn down and given to the milliners. "What shall we do with it? ask they. "Do?" replied Burton, with imperturbable gravity, "Why, you can hemstitch it up one side, and backstitch it down the other—and then gusset it all around!" The fun waxes fast and furious, when suddenly the employer returns. The *dénouement* can be imagined; we cannot describe it;—but those who remember Burton's mimetic power, and his faculty to express abject terror and kindred emotions, can well understand what a scene of indescribable riotous humor it was. And we cannot omit, in refer-

ring to this farce, to mention the admirable support given by the lamented Mrs. Hughes, who, as one of the milliners, contributed largely to the general success by her conscientious acting.

How can we, in this allotted space, deal justly with our crowding memories? What shall we say of *Jem Baggs*, in "The Wandering Minstrel"?—that minstrel whose entrance on the stage was heralded by a sounding strain certainly never before heard on sea or land, and whose appearance, as he emerged from the wing, continuing still the dirge-like air, was a signal for a gleeful burst all over the house. How paint his introduction, under a mistaken identity, into musical society; the situation that follows; his song of "All Around My Hat"; the comic incidents that strew the too-fleeting hour of his career?

How view him as *Pillicoddy*, awaiting with supreme anguish the "turning up" of his wife's "first," through all the phases of ludicrous bravado and comic despair?

How depict him in "Turning the Tables"? or in "The Siamese Twins"? or in "That Blessed Baby"? How see him as *Mr. Dabchick*, in "The Happiest Day of My Life"? or as *Megrim*, in "Blue Devils," and ever so many more?

And yet we ought to linger on each one; for we have never seen them since, and it may be we may never see them again—certain is it that we shall never see them so performed. And only for the sake of refreshing a memory of something greater would we wish to behold them now.

In concluding this imperfect tracing of recollection, we are conscious of many deficiencies; one of these a few final words may supply.

We have said nothing of the individualization of Burton's many characters in farce. It is true that the native hue and flavor of the comedian's humor were so strong, and his physique so pronounced, that he himself was always more or less apparent in whatever

guise; but it would be a great mistake to suppose that in the parts above named there was no essential difference, with respect to portraiture. There was a difference, and it was clearly marked. Each was a picture by itself —each a distinct characterization; and in the development the author was often left so far behind that the actor became the creator. But this loyalty to ideal perception denotes, as it seem to us, that even in farcical abandon his delineations were shaped and governed by his artistic sense.

MR. BURTON IN PARTS HE MADE SPECIALLY FAMOUS.

The familiar picture of John Philip Kemble in the character of *Hamlet*, standing at *Ophelia's* grave, in sad retrospection over the skull of Yorick, always impressed us as a revelation of the fact that an actor's fame is bequeathed to posterity in the traditions of effect produced by a few celebrated embodiments, and is forever associated with those special triumphs.

That Kemble was a supreme representative of the impressive school, that he merited the glowing eulogium contained in Campbell's eloquent verses, there will be no question; but when we think of him or read of him, the figure of the Dane looms up in sombre majesty, and we are haunted by the avenging spirit of Elsinore.

The picture of Edmund Kean, as *Richard*, kneeling at the feet of *Lady Anne*, with the words, "Take up the sword again, or take up me," upon his lips, impresses us in the same way; and any thought of that great tragedian conjures an attendant vision of the dark and aspiring *Gloster*.

When, in the years to come, the name of Jefferson is spoken, will not imagination linger on *Rip Van Winkle's* long slumber amid the everlasting hills? and will not Sothern and Raymond appeal to a future generation as *Dundreary* of the glaring eye, and *Sellers* of the uplifted arm? And we have no doubt that Mr. Burton is, in the memory of those

now living who saw him, and will be to those who shall know him from tradition and dramatic annals, the actor who was so inimitable as *Captain Cuttle*, *Aminadab Sleek*, and *Timothy Toodles*. And no wonder. The mere mention of them opens the flood-gate of recollection, and we seem to hear far down the aisles of time the free, glad laughter of delighted audiences. If, haply, in our memories hitherto we have struck in some heart the chord of reminiscence, surely now we may hope to prolong the strain. For, among the many who are still here to tell of their nights at Burton's, few, perchance, will revert to *Bob Acres* or *Goldfinch*, *Nick Bottom* or *Autolycus;* while all, at the comedian's name, will at once summon the images of *Cuttle*, *Sleek*, and *Toodles*.

In view of the extraordinary popularity of these performances, we shall treat now of certain parts made specially famous by Mr. Burton, and present in another group a view of other and various characters in his comedy repertory.

A favorite part, and one which always delighted us, was that prince of stage busybodies, *Paul Pry*. The character as Poole drew it affords unusual scope for the exhibition of comic power, and in Burton's hands its humorous possibilities were made the most of. The play was frequently on the bills, and always drew a house that followed the comedian through all his mirth-moving entanglements in a state of hilarious enjoyment. The more we think of it, the more we are disposed to class *Paul Pry* as one of Burton's masterpieces, so rich was it in certain phases of humor and so replete with droll suggestiveness. It may not, perhaps, be generally known that Mr. Burton was the second comedian who played the part in England, and it was a favorite of the renowned Liston, whose impersonation of it won him fame and fortune. There is a story to the effect that at the last rehearsal of the comedy, previous to its presentation at the Haymarket, Liston was undecided as to his costume; and while on the stage, still doubtful and uncertain,

a workman entered on some errand, wearing a large pair of Cossack trousers, which, it being a wet day, he had tucked into his wellingtons. The appearance of the trousers struck Liston, who adopted the idea; and hence the origin of the dress peculiar to *Pry*. We remember very well the general effect of Burton's "make-up"; can recall various details; but the point of the trousers is not clear; so a better memory than ours must determine whether or no Liston's notion was perpetuated by his successor.

We see Burton now, as he entered upon the scene at *Doubledot's* inn with: "Ha! how d' ye do, Doubledot?" and we hear him asking with ingratiating audacity question after question, pausing for an answer after each one, and in no wise put out at getting none,—"never miss any thing for the want of asking, you know." Then his lingering departure, and *Doubledot's* fervent: "I 've got rid of him at last, thank heaven!" No, he returns. "I dropped one of my gloves" (looking about). *Doubledot* waxes impatient and speaks his mind.

"Mr. Doubledot," said Burton, swelling with insulted dignity, "I want my property; I want my property, sir. When I came in here I had two gloves, and now—ah—that 's very odd; I 've got it in my hand all this time!" (hasty exit). How little it seems in the telling. The air of anxiety on returning, and the eye-glass brought into play; the look of injured innocence, the indignant assertion, and then the sudden collapse—cannot be reproduced in words.

The piece is full of diverting situations, but nothing was more natural than that Burton should improve on and add to them. His bright instinct kindled the dry fagots of a scene till they fairly crackled with merriment. Certain "business," humorous amplification of dialogue, a diffusion of comic incident, that we vividly recall, are not to be found in the printed "Paul Pry"; and the conclusion of the second act, especially, where the pistols are used with such ludicrous effect, all that was Burton's own. The pistols lay on the

table, left there by *Col. Hardy*, and *Pry* is alone. Burton took them up, one in each hand. He regarded the weapons fixedly. Then, with solemn enunciation: "I never fought a duel; but if I was called out," extending an arm, "I say if I was called out"—bang! went one of the pistols, and down dropped Burton, the picture of fright, when bang! went the other, and the curtain fell on the comedian sitting in abject terror, a smoking pistol in each hand, gazing in every direction for succor, and wildly ejaculating "Murder!" Then, at the close of the play, when *Pry* reminds *Col. Hardy* that, thanks to him (*Pry*), things, after all, have resulted to the satisfaction of everybody, the *Colonel* relaxes his sternness somewhat and says: "Well, I will tolerate you; you shall dine with me to-day." "Colonel," replied Burton, with airy condescension, "I 'll dine with you every day."

It was a rare pleasure to see Placide and Burton in their respective parts; and as once again we think of them the Chambers Street

stage is before us, and the garden scene; and we see *Col. Hardy* place the ladder against the wall, mount it and peer cautiously over, and then hastily descend, saying: "I have him; there he is, crouching on the ground with his eye at the key-hole"; see him quietly approach the gate, suddenly open it, and once again as of old, Burton tumbles in, umbrella and all, with "How are you, Colonel! I've just dropped in!"

He will never more drop in for us, nor does it seem likely that in our day another *Paul Pry* will appear. The play may have been performed in New York since the comedian's death, and we seem dimly to remember that it was; but we have no recollection beyond the simple circumstance. We feel sure, however, that public interest in it ceased with the departure of its last great representative; and equally sure that in the memory of those who saw it, Burton's *Paul Pry* remains a famous creation of delightful humor.

What shall we say of *Captain Cuttle?* How many readers and lovers of Dickens thronged

the theatre in the old days to witness that wonderful reproduction? and how many to whom Dickens was but a name were led by the impersonation to study the pages of the great novelist? It is certain that Burton by his sympathetic and admirable portrayal awakened a fresh interest in the enchanting story, so potent to excite intellectual pursuit is fine and sagacious interpretation. "Dombey and Son" was one of the great triumphs of the Chambers Street Theatre, and not to have seen it constituted an offence against public sentiment utterly without palliation. That it was Charles Dickens dramatized by John Brougham was enough of itself to claim respectful attention; and when Burton added the crowning effect of his acting of *Cuttle*, then indeed was the dramatic feast complete. Nothing could be clearer than that the comedian had made careful and conscientious study of his author, and nothing surer than that the portrait was conceived in an appreciative and loving spirit. If those familiar with the character as depicted

by Dickens discerned at times certain felicitous touches in Burton's delineation which suggested an originality of method and treatment, the points were due, we think, to the genius of the novelist acting upon the actor's imagination, and kindling it to the expression of cognate verisimilitude.

What a memory it is to linger on! How the form comes back, clad in the white suit; the high collar, like a small sail, and the black silk handkerchief with flaring ends loosely encircling it; the head bald at top, a shining pathway between the bristling hair on each side; the bushy eyebrows arching the reverential eyes; the knob-environed nose; the waistcoat with buttons innumerable; the glazed hat under his left arm; the hook gravely extended at the end of his right. "May we never want a friend in need, or a bottle to give him! Overhaul the Proverbs of Solomon, and when found make a note of," we hear him saying; and then we follow him through those inimitable scenes which cannot be easily for-

gotten by those who witnessed them. The scene where he cheers up *Florence*, and makes such dexterous play with his hook, adjusting her bonnet and manipulating the tea—and yet exhibiting a simple and natural pathos with it all; where he sits in admiring contemplation of *Bunsby*, while that oracular tar delivers his celebrated opinion respecting the fate of the vessel, with the memorable addendum: "The bearings of this observation lays in the application on it"; the scene with the *MacStingers*, and the *Captain's* despair; the timely intervention of *Bunsby;* the despair changed to wondering awe; and then all the suggestive by-play consequent upon his delivery by *Bunsby* from the impending *MacStinger* vengeance;—all this, and much more than we can describe, passes by like a panorama in memory. Burton's *Captain Cuttle* occupies a conspicuous place in the gallery of famous dramatic pictures, and there it will long remain.[1] As we

[1] Ireland, in referring to certain qualities of Burton's acting, says: "While in homely pathos, and the earnest expres-

think of it in all the details which made it so perfect an embodiment, it seems a pity that Dickens himself never saw it. We can fancy that had he chanced to be in New York when "Dombey and Son" was the theatrical sensation, and had dropped in at Chambers Street, an auditor all unknown, he would have made his way behind the scenes, and to Burton's dressing-room, and with both hands would have grasped the comedian's hook and enthusiastically shaken it.

"The Serious Family" and "The Toodles"! What memories of joyous, laughing hours the names awaken! Never, we venture to say, were playhouse audiences regaled with so surpassing a feast of mirth as that spread by Burton in his performance of those renowned specialities—*Aminadab Sleek* and *Timothy Toodles*. No comedian, we believe, of whom we

sion of blunt, uncultivated feeling, he has rarely been excelled. His grief at the supposed death of Walter Gay, or poor Wally, as Captain Cuttle affectionately called him, was one of the most touching bits of acting ever witnessed, and has wrung tears from many an unwilling eye."

have any record, excelled those efforts in variety of mimetic effect, facial expression, and display of comic power. That in them the extreme limit of humorous demonstration was reached, the public generally acknowledged. The two plays had their regular nights, and thousands flocked, week after week, to the banquet of jollity, all unsatisfied, though again and again they had revelled there. No greater contrast could be offered an audience than that presented by the two pieces of acting. The sanctimonious and lugubrious *Sleek;* the effusive and rubicund *Toodles!* Coming one after the other, in every way so different, the instance of versatility made a deep impression, and prompted a thought on the flexibility of human genius. We are reminded at this moment of an incident which occurred one evening in connection with "The Serious Family," which added an unexpected feature to the entertainment. Burton did not appear in the first piece, and the audience, eager for *Aminadab*, were glad

when the orchestra ceased. But the prompter's bell did not tinkle. After a pause the orchestra played again, and again finished. Still no bell. Signs of impatience began, and as the delay continued the hubbub increased. An attempt on the part of the musicians to fill the gap was received with evident displeasure. At last, when nearly half an hour had elapsed, the bell sounded, and the curtain rose on the familiar group of *Sleek*, *Lady Creamly*, and *Mrs. Torrens*. Applause broke out all over the house; but with it were mingled a few ill-humored hisses. Burton left his place at the table and came forward to the foot-lights. There he stood in the well-known suit of pepper and salt, the straight gray hair framing the solemn visage of *Sleek*. Then, in his own proper voice, he explained the cause of the delay—a mishap of travel,—expressed his regret, and begged the indulgence of the audience. A storm of approval followed his speech, in the midst of which he resumed his place, instantly assuming his character; and

as the applause died away another voice succeeded, the voice of *Sleek*, in nasal tone, saying: "We appeal to the disciples of true benevolence, and the doers of good deeds, without distinction of politics or party," etc. The effect of the transition was irresistible; and the loss of time was forgotten in the gain of a new delight. And now another story of "The Serious Family" comes to mind, and it is too good to be lost. Playing in Atlanta, Georgia, he found a wretched theatre, without appointments or properties. At the conclusion of the overture the prompter ran to Burton with the announcement that there was no bell to ring up the curtain. "Good gracious, what a place! Here, my lad," he said to a little fellow who acted as call-boy, "run out and get us a bell—any thing will do —a cow bell, if you can't get any thing better." Away went the boy, the orchestra vainly endeavoring to quiet the audience with popular airs. Back came the boy, pale and breathless, gasping out: "There ain't a bell in the whole town, sir!"

"What 's to be done now?" asked the prompter.

"Shake the thunder!" No sooner said than done. Up went the curtain, and "The Serious Family" commenced amidst the most terrific peal heard in that theatre for many a year.

It goes without saying that Burton's *Sleek* and *Toodles*, especially the latter, though founded on another's outlines, were so built upon and humorously amplified, that in diverting dramatic effect they were clearly his own creations, and owed their importance to the impress of the actor's transforming power. When we read "The Serious Family" as written by Morris Barnett, clever though it be, we see at once where the author ends and the actor begins; and as for "The Toodles," it is sufficient to say that the *Timothy Toodles* of Burton was never dreamed of by the playwright.

How shall we describe to those who were born too late to witness them, these famous performances of the great comedian? We feel

that all description must fail in giving any idea of the infinite variety and scope of comic humor they exhibited. We might, indeed, for they are vivid in remembrance, take our readers through the many scenes, and show them *Sleek*, from the entrance of *Captain Maguire*, in the first act, to Burton's enraged exit in the last ; picturing, as we go, the situations without parallel in droll device and mirth-moving complication ; show them *Toodles*, from his arraignment of *Mrs. Toodles* for her multifarious and preposterous bargains, not forgetting the *door-plate* of *Thompson—Thompson* with a *p*—nor "he had a brother,"—to his inimitable tipsy scene and the memorable soliloquy, "That man reminds me" ;—but, however exhaustive the relation in words, after all was said, we should still hopelessly leave the effect to be guessed at with the help of imagination.

We have thus endeavored to give impressions from memory of certain parts in which Burton was specially famous ; and they seem to us, on account of their versatility and range

of humorous spirit, to be conspicuous examples of that varied power which led us to style the comedian an expounder of the Humor of the Drama in all its aspects. If the sojourn on earth of old Robert Burton was intended to give the world an "Anatomy of Melancholy," surely the mission of the later Burton was to lay bare the whole body of mirth.

MR. BURTON IN COMEDY AND SHAKESPEARE.

As we think of the many parts in which it was our good fortune to see Mr. Burton, we are led into a reflection on the surprising versatility displayed by them; and we question whether the record of any comedian embraces a repertory so extensive, so varied, and so distinguished for general ability. The performances we are about to recall, though exhibiting many humorous features in common, were each a distinct conception; and the execution of each was a dramatic portrait by itself, artistic in measure, faithful in delineation, and felicitous in the expression of points of character.

The Burtonian element—in the shape of by-play, gesture, accent, facial device, mimetic effect—was visible in the composition, as a matter of course, contributing to the picture's expansion, deepening its tints and emphasizing its characteristics,—added touches that were the actor's stamp and sign-manual. We have cited *Sleek* and *Toodles* as strongly contrasting parts, and so indeed they were; but we might easily adduce instances of versatility quite as striking, and would do so were it not more than likely that they will appear to our readers as our memories progress. It is said that the celebrated William Farren used to style himself a "cock salmon," the only fish of his kind in the market; and if unique dramatic distinction lies in that piscatorial image, most assuredly Mr. Burton was a cock salmon of the first water.

We cannot hope to remember every thing we saw Mr. Burton play, yet we think our recollection will embrace a fair array of those characters in comedy and divers pieces which

he alone in his generation seemed adequately to fill, and which were such a boon of delight to the audiences of long ago.

There was his *Micawber*, in the dramatization of "David Copperfield," which succeeded "Dombey and Son,"—equal to if not surpassing his *Cuttle;* an inimitable reproduction of the novelist's creation, full of humorous point, and sustained with an indescribable airy complacence and bland assumption of resource, that made it a perfect treat to lovers of Dickens; and those who saw "David Copperfield" may well rejoice, for they hold in memory Burton's *Micawber*, Johnston's *Uriah Heep*, and Mrs. Hughes' *Betsy Trotwood!*

There was *Bumble*, the beadle, in "Oliver Twist," a very funny piece of acting, and especially so in the well-known scene with *Mrs. Corney*, where, in excess of tenderness, he tells her that "any cat, or kitten, that could live with you ma'am, and *not* be fond of its home, must be a ass ma'am." And then when the matron is called away and the beadle remains,

his proceedings are described by Dickens thus: "Mr. Bumble's conduct on being left to himself was rather inexplicable. He opened the closet, counted the teaspoons, weighed the sugar-tongs, closely inspected the silver milk-pot to ascertain that it was of the genuine metal, and, having satisfied his curiosity on these points, put on his cocked hat cornerwise, and danced with much gravity four distinct times round the table. Having gone through this very extraordinary performance, he took off the cocked hat again, and spreading himself before the fire with his back toward it, seemed to be mentally engaged in taking an exact inventory of the furniture." We deem it enough to say that Mr. Burton's management of the foregoing "business" left nothing to be desired.

We may note, in the mention of "Oliver Twist," that *Nancy Sykes* was played by the late Fanny Wallack, with a fidelity of purpose and a pathetic abandon that made it painful to witness.

To continue with Dickens: there were *Squeers* and *Sam Weller*, both capital in their way—the last, however, lacking, as it seemed to us, in true Wellerian flavor; but the *Squeers* was marked by an appreciative recognition of the schoolmaster's grim traits; and the scene at *Dotheboys Hall* was admirably given; Mrs. Hughes, as *Mrs. Squeers*, "made up" to the life, and irresistible in her distribution of the treacle.

All these portraits from the pages of Dickens were so many meritorious presentments of the novelist's creations, and would have won enduring fame for an actor of smaller calibre; the truth is, in Mr, Burton's case, that his *Bumble*, *Squeers*, and *Weller* were but dimly seen, owing to the greater glory of his *Cuttle* and *Micawber*.

We saw Mr. Burton as *Bob Acres*, in "The Rivals"; as *Tony Lumpkin*, in "She Stoops to Conquer"; as *Goldfinch*, in "The Road to Ruin"; as *Doctor Ollapod*, in "The Poor Gentleman"; as *Sir George Thunder*, in "Wild

Oats"; as *Job Thornberry*, in "John Bull"; as *Sir Oliver Surface*, in "The School for Scandal"; as *Graves*, in Bulwer's "Money"; as the *Mock Duke*, in "The Honeymoon"; as *Adam Brock*, in "Charles XII."; as *Van Dunder*, in "The Dutch Governor"; as *John Smith*, in "Nature's Nobleman"; as *Mr. Sudden*, in "The Breach of Promise"; as *Thomas Trot*, in "Paris and London"; as *Don Ferolo Whiskerandos*, in "The Critic" of Sheridan; as *Triplet*, in "Masks and Faces";—certainly a gallery of dramatic portraits that would put to the test the highest order of ability; and we feel bound to say that Burton passed the ordeal well deserving the encomiums that were bestowed upon his efforts. It would be too much to expect that all these delineations were even in points of conception and execution; yet all were entitled to respectful consideration, and many were masterpieces. We will endeavor to go through them briefly, in remembrance of the happy hours we owe to their joyous influence.

The recent appearance of Jefferson as *Bob Acres* has aroused a new interest in the character, and from all accounts the performance was more than equal to expectation, and has enhanced the reputation of the comedian. We hope to have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Jefferson in due time, and we fancy that his acting of *Acres* would refresh somewhat our recollection of Burton in the part. As it is, however, we cannot vouch for a clear memory of Burton's *Acres*. We saw it but once, and then early in life, when we were new to the theatre; and all we seem to remember is that he was very funny with his curl papers, and his "referential or allegorical swearing," and that the duel scene was very amusing. It was the opinion of Hazlitt that Sheridan overdid the part, and accordingly he goes on to say: "It calls for a greater effort of animal spirits and a peculiar aptitude of genius in the actor to go through with it, to humor the extravagance, and to seem to take a real and cordial delight in caricaturing himself." This criticism is not

without force; but whatever may have been Burton's conception, we are certain that a bright intelligence informed it, and that in the portrayal a requisite display of "animal spirits" was not lacking. If, among the audience that greeted Jefferson, there chanced to be any old play-goers of tenacious memory who had seen Burton, let us hope that they improved the occasion by pleasant reminiscence.

Tony Lumpkin was a very comic piece of acting, and made the people laugh immoderately; but we confess that the character has little charm for us. Burton used to sing the song of "The Three Jolly Pigeons" (in the ale-house scene) with more expression than melody; but he threw into it a great deal of frolic spirit and made it quite a feature.

In our youthful days, when witnessing "The Road to Ruin," we knew very well the moment when we should hear the voice of *Goldfinch* outside; and we remember his bustling entrance, in sporting frock, buff waiscoat, and top boots, whip in hand, and his rattling flow

of horse-talk; his strut and his "that 's your sort!" It is said that Lewis, of Covent Garden, (the original *Goldfinch*,) "gave to that catch-phrase a variety of intonation which made it always new and effective"; and Burton certainly played upon it adroitly. His delivery of the text was full of point and animation, and his articulation admirable. "Why, you are a high fellow, Charles," says *Harry Dornton*. "To be sure!" replies *Goldfinch*, "know the odds—hold four-in-hand—turn a corner in style—reins in form—elbows square—wrist pliant—hayait!—drive the Coventry stage twice a week all summer—pay for an inside place—mount the box—tip the coachy a crown—beat the mail—come in full speed—rattle down the gateway—take care of your heads!—never killed but one woman and a child in all my life—that 's your sort!" We hear Burton's voice, we see his face and his gestures now!

We were always fond of Colman's "Poor Gentleman," and we took great delight in seeing Burton as *Doctor Ollapod*. As all know,

the character affords wide scope for diverting treatment. The incidents are many and droll —and we think Burton turned every thing to the best account. Henry Placide played the part more artistically; but it was not possible for him to expound its humorous nature with the richness that came easily to Burton. We never think of Colman's comedy without a feeling of grateful pleasure; for its representation at various times gave us Burton and Placide as *Ollapod;* Burton as *Sir Robert Bramble;* Dyott, as *Worthington;* Mrs. Hughes as *Lucretia McTab;* and Johnston as *Humphrey Dobbins.*

We have referred in another place to *Sir George Thunder* and *Job Thornberry;* and we need not dwell upon them further than to say that both gave glimpses of that versatile power to which we have alluded, and both were full of the comedian's characteristic ability.

We suppose that *Sir Oliver Surface* would not be deemed a part exactly in Mr. Burton's "line"; and yet, as we remember it, he in-

vested the character with a simple dignity, and played it with manly directness and feeling.

Our memory of *Mr. Graves* and the *Mock Duke* is dim and distant; but if our readers desire another example of versatility, we commend the two parts as furnishing a most conspicuous instance.

We have never seen "Charles XII." and "The Dutch Governor" since we saw Burton as *Adam Brock* and *Van Dunder;* but we assure the play-goers of to-day that the dramas were well worth seeing long ago when Liston played in them, and equally so when his great successor appeared in them at a later period. Burton rarely played *Adam Brock*, and we cannot remember seeing it more than once, when it impressed us greatly. "The Dutch Governor," on the contrary, was a favorite attraction at the Chambers Street Theatre, and Burton's *Van Dunder* was a rich feast of mirthful enjoyment.

Pardey's "Nature's Nobleman," purporting to be an American comedy, was first produced

at Burton's in 1851. The prologue, which was spoken by the manager, contained these lines:

> " The drama languishes. Let us detect—
> Polonius-like—the cause of this defect !
> 'T is certain that the sprightliest tongue must fail
> To win attention to an ' oft-told tale.'
> We cannot, ever, with ' crook'd Richard ' fight,
> Or weep with Desdemona every night ;
> And even cloying is the luscious sack,
> If we too often sip with ' burly Jack ' ;
> Nor, every week, will people take the trouble
> To witness Hecate's cauldron hiss and bubble ;
> Nor can we, as we have done, hope to draw
> Still on the Rivals or the Heir-at-Law.
> We 've seen shy ' Jack ' his father's anger rouse ;
> We 've heard Lord Dowlas ' tutored ' by his spouse.
> Old English comedy should now give way ;
> It has, like Acres' ' dammes,' had its day.
> Hang up bag wigs—our study now should be
> The men and the moustachios that we see.
> Let us some pictures of the time provide ;
> Let the pen practically be applied."

Whether or no the comedy gave us " the men and the moustachios that we see," or provided " some pictures of the time," we shall not pretend to say ;—one would think so, since Blake, Burton, Bland, Dyott, Mrs. Hughes, Mary Taylor, Miss Weston, and Caroline Chap-

man were in the cast,—but, at all events, it gave us Burton's *John Smith*, which was well worth a journey to see. *John Smith* is "gentleman" to the *Earl of Leamington* (Dyott), who is making an American tour. The *Earl* gives his attendant a two-months' holiday to enjoy himself; and *Smith*, having dressed within an inch of his life, is taken for the *Earl*, and yields to the temptation to pass himself off as such. Out of this complication arise situations ludicrous in the extreme, through which Burton moved, the dispenser of mirth without end. His "make-up," his air, his self-sufficiency, his ignorance,—of which he is grotesquely unconscious,—his blundering malapropos speeches, his frequent social collapses and absurd attempts at recovery, his facial expression at mental mishap and irresistible by-play consequent, his constant display of mimetic power, his voice, look, manner,—all together made a picture of varied humor, which kept the house in hearty laughter from his entrance to the curtain's fall.

Mr. Sudden, in Buckstone's "Breach of Promise," was still another of those peculiar parts upon which Burton lavished his supreme gift of humor; and we owe to its diverting exposition many a gladsome hour.

Funny, too, beyond measure, were *Thomas Trot* and *Don Whiskerandos;* we see the first in the many comic incidents during the voyage from Paris to London; and we see *Don Whiskerandos* "quit this bustling scene" by rolling himself with marvellous celerity out of sight in the folds of the stage carpet.

We have reached the end of our string, with the exception of *Triplet*, and should love to linger in description on the blended humor and pathos of the impersonation. Let it suffice that not even Mr. Fisher's admirable presentment can dim the recollection of Burton's masterly delineation.

And now let us in our remaining space recall our memories of the Shakespearian parts in which we saw the great actor.

"A Midsummer-Night's Dream" was pro-

duced at Burton's in 1854, and the manager played *Bottom*. We well remember with what delight the play was received, and what a marked sensation was created by the scenery and stage effect. The public wondered how so much could be presented on so small a stage, and its accomplishment was a theme of general admiration. The fairy element was made a beautiful feature, and the spirit of poetry brooded over the whole production. The unanimity of the press in its encomiums on the revival was remarkable; and no more emphatic recognition of Burton's appreciation and knowledge of Shakespeare could be given than was expressed in that approving accord.

As we think of it now, it seems to us that Burton's idea of *Bottom* was the true one, and we enjoyed the performance immensely. It is very easy to make the character a sort of buffoon; but nothing, of course, was further than that notion from Burton's conception. Mr. Richard Grant White gives, in his "Shakespeare's Scholar," an admirable analysis of

Bottom's characteristics, and at the close remarks: "As Mr. Burton renders the character, its traits are brought out with a delicate and masterly hand; its humor is exquisite." We remember his acting in the scene where the artisans meet for the distribution of parts in the play to be given before the *Duke;* —how striking it was in sustained individuality, and how finely exemplified was the potential vanity of Bottom. With what ingrained assurance he exclaimed: "Let me play the lion too; I will roar, that it will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, *Let him roar again, let him roar again!*" He was capital, too, in the scene of the rehearsal, and in his translation; and the love scene with *Titania* aroused lively interest. What pleased us greatly was the vein of engaging raillery which ran through his delivery of the speeches to the fairies, *Cobweb*, *Peas-blossom*, and *Mustard-seed.* It goes without saying, that as *Pyramus* in the tragedy Burton created unbounded amusement, and discharged the

arduous part of the ill-starred lover with entire satisfaction to everybody.

Sir Toby Belch, in "Twelfth Night," was one of Burton's richest performances, and we remember it with the greatest pleasure. It was characterized by true Shakespearian spirit, and was acted with an animation and unctuous humor quite impossible to describe. The scene of the carousal wherein *Sir Toby* and *Aguecheek* are discovered; the arrival of the Clown with his "How, now, my hearts? Did you never see the picture of we three?" and *Belch's* greeting of "Welcome, ass,"—inaugurated an episode of extraordinary mirth, in which Burton moved the absolute monarch of merriment. The duel scene and the scene in the garden, when *Malvolio* reads the letter, were full of the comedian's diverting power; and we can recall no single instance of humorous execution which more perfectly fulfilled all conditions.

Burton played *Touchstone* and *Dogberry*, as has been mentioned; but it was never our good fortune to see him in either. We saw

him, as *Caliban*, in "The Tempest"; as *Autolycus*, in "Winter's Tale"; and as *Falstaff*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." His *Caliban* we have tried to forget rather than remember; it terrified us and made us dream bad dreams; but for all that, we know that it was a surprising impersonation. His *Autolycus* was a model of oily roguery, and another instance of that wondrous versatility of genius with which the comedian was endowed. Very dim in memory is Burton's *Sir John Falstaff*. We remember the scene in the Garter Inn, and the letters to the merry wives, and, of course, the *dénouement* of the clothes-basket, and the frolic at Herne's Oak,—but we cannot go into detail; and we always thought we should like Burton so much better in the *Falstaff* of "Henry IV." The mention of "Henry IV." reminds us that it was once produced at the Chambers Street Theatre, when Hackett played *Sir John* to Lester Wallack's *Prince Hal;* and in order that nothing might be lacking in honor to Shakespeare, Burton and Blake played the two *Car-*

riers in Scene I. of Act II. Fancy those two comedians with about twenty-five lines only between them in a play of five acts! But they must have covered themselves with glory.

We have endeavored in this retrospect to furnish a view of the comedian in a number of characters; and we think, however meagre our account, it still forcibly indicates the scope and range of Burton's abilities, and exhibits him in a wide scene of varied and striking dramatic power. We have depicted him in farce, in comedy, and in Shakespearian delineations; and it is not too much to say that generations will likely pass ere his fellow shall appear. We have heard and read of attempts being made by ambitious actors to revive his masterpieces, and that the efforts were highly commendable. Perhaps they were—

> "A substitute shines brightly as a king
> Until a king be by."

MR. BURTON'S LIBRARY.

"My library was dukedom large enough."—SHAKESPEARE.

MR. BURTON'S LIBRARY.

MR. BURTON resided at No. 174 Hudson Street, New York, and owned also a beautiful country-seat at Glen Cove, Long Island, now the property of Mr. S. L. M. Barlow. In a building adjoining his Hudson Street residence, and connected therewith by a conservatory gallery, were contained his magnificent library, treasures of art, and precious relics. Scholars, actors, and men of art and letters were frequent visitors there, and the owner took a laudable pride in displaying his matchless collection.

A very interesting story of the painter Elliot may be told in this connection. He was often a visitor, and the striking resemblance between the artist's head and the accepted bust of Shakespeare was a matter of common observation. On one occasion, on being shown by

Burton a choice Shakespearian acquisition, he became intensely interested, and quietly seated himself in a study-chair the better to examine the prize. "Meantime," says our narrator, "Burton and myself were engaged in other parts of the house, and at last we came back to the library. Burton looked through the door, and placing one hand on his mouth, he put the other on my chest, and thus held me back. I shall never forget his singular look at the moment. There sat Elliot at the table, dressed in a suit of plain black, his hand supporting his cheek, and his eyes intent upon the book. The evening light from the ceiling fell softly upon his high and delicately formed forehead; just over him was an exact copy of the effigy which marks the great dramatist's grave. The resemblance, or the hallucination, for the moment was complete, and Burton, with eyes fairly dilating with admiration and astonishment, said: 'Shakespeare living again! Was there ever such a resemblance?'"

It has been thought appropriate to include

in this volume a description of the library, from the pen of James Wynne, M.D., who in 1860 published an account of his visits to various private libraries in New York, and Mr. Burton's was among the number. At the time of Mr. Burton's death the collection was probably larger, Dr. Wynne's visit having been made at a much earlier date than the publication of his volume. Every lover of Shakespeare, we think, will thank us for enriching this book with a description of that matchless library.

WM. E. BURTON'S LIBRARY.

Mr. Burton's library contains nearly sixteen thousand volumes. Its proprietor had constructed for its accommodation and preservation a three-story fire-proof building, about thirty-five feet square, which is isolated from all other buildings, and is connected with his residence in Hudson Street by a conservatory gallery. The chief library room occupies the upper floor of this building, and is about

twenty-five feet in height. Its ceiling presents a series of groined rafters, after the old English style, in the centre of which rises a dome skylight of stained glass. The sides of the library are fitted up with thirty-six oak bookcases of a Gothic pattern, which entirely surround it, and are nine feet in height. The space between the ceiling and the bookcases is filled with paintings, for the most part of large size, and said to be of value. Specimens of armor and busts of distinguished authors decorate appropriate compartments, and in a prominent niche at the head of the apartment, stands a full-length statue of Shakespeare, executed by Thom, in the same style as the Tam O'Shanter and Old Mortality groups of this Scotch sculptor.

The great speciality of the library is its Shakespeare collection; but although very extensive and valuable, it by no means engrosses the entire library, which contains a large number of valuable works in several departments of literature.

The number of lexicons and dictionaries is large, and among the latter may be found all the rare old English works so valuable for reference. Three bookcases are devoted to serials, which contain many of the standard reviews and magazines. One case is appropriated to voyages and travels, in which are found many valuable ones. In another are upward of one hundred volumes of table-talk, and numerous works on the fine arts and bibliography. One bookcase is devoted to choice works on America, among which is Sebastian Munster's "Cosmographia Novum Orbis Regionum," published in folio at Basle in 1537, which contains full notes of Columbus, Vespucci, and other early voyagers. Another department contains a curious catalogue of authorities relating to *Crime and Punishment;* a liberal space is devoted to *Facetiæ*, another to American Poetry, and also one to Natural and Moral Philosophy. The standard works of Fiction, Biography, Theology, and the Drama are all represented.

There is a fair collection of classical authors,

many of which are of Aldine and Elzevir editions. Among the rarities in this department is a folio copy of *Plautus*, printed at Venice in 1518, and illustrated with wood-cuts. The true name of this writer was T. Maccius Plautus. He was of humble origin, and is supposed to have once been a slave. He lived at Rome about one hundred and eighty years before the beginning of the Christian era, and wrote a number of plays which obtained great celebrity in the time of their author, and continued to be looked upon as models of this species of composition for many centuries after his decease. Twenty of his plays are extant, which are distinguished for the purity of their style and the exquisite humor of their characters, although Horace blames him for the coarseness of his wit. Gellius, who held him in much esteem, says that he was distinguished for his poetry upon the stage at the time that Cato was for his eloquence in the forum. The first edition of his works was printed at Venice, in 1472, by Merula. The edition of 1518,

in this collection, is so rare as not to be mentioned by Brunet, De Bure, or Michael Mattaire. There is also a folio edition of Sallust, published at Venice in 1511, with wood-cuts; an excellent copy of Statius, published at Venice in 1498; and a translation from the Greek of Plutarch into Latin by Guarini, of Verona, surnamed Veronese, who was the first of a family celebrated for their literary attainments, and who is frequently confounded with Battista Guarini, the author of "Il Pastor Fido." Guarini Veronese was the grammarian of his day, and a strong advocate for the preservation of the Greek language in its purity. He was an assiduous student, and spent considerable time at Constantinople in copying the manuscripts of the best models in Grecian literature. Accompanied by his precious freight, he set sail for Italy, but was shipwrecked, and lost all of his laboriously acquired treasure, which produced such an effect upon him as to change his hair from a dark color to white in a single night. The

world is indebted to him for the first edition of the "Commentaries" of Servius on Virgil, and likewise for the recovery of a number of manuscript poems of Catullus, which he found mouldering and almost obliterated in a garret. With the assistance of his father, he applied himself to the task of deciphering them, and, with the exception of a few verses, reproduced them entirely.

The collection is well supplied with editions of Virgil. In addition to Ogilby's folio, with Hollar and Fairthorne's plates, is a choice copy of the illustrated edition in three folio volumes, and the very rare *fac-simile* Florentine edition of 1741 (*Ex cod. Mediceo Laurentiano*). This edition is now so scarce that a copy was recently sold in London for fifty pounds sterling.

The collection also contains a copy of the Vatican edition of Terence, in Latin and Italian, after the text of Heinsius, with numerous illustrations of ancient masks, etc., published at Rome in two folio volumes in

1767; an excellent copy of the best edition of Suetonius, with commentaries by Baraldi, printed in Roman letter at Paris in 1512; "Titi Livii," published at Nuremberg in folio, in 1514, in its original wood binding; Livy's Roman History, published in 1600—the first English edition; "Diogenes Laërtius de Vitis et Dogmatibus Philosophorum," published at Amsterdam in 1692; a vellum black-letter copy of Eusebius, of the rare Venetian edition of 1483; Boëtius, published in 1570; the two original editions of the eminent critic, Justus Lipsius; the Antwerp edition of Seneca, published in 1570; the same work in folio, in 1613; and Stephen's edition of Sophocles, published in 1518, which is an admirable specimen of Greek typography.

Among the Italian poets is a copy of Dante, in folio, published in 1497, with most remarkable cuts; and the "Commentaries" of Landino, the most highly valued of all the old commentators upon this poet; also an excellent large-paper copy of Tasso, in the original

text, with Morghen's exquisite line engravings, published in 1820, in two folio volumes.

Cervantes appears to have been quite a favorite with the possessor of this library, who has the excellent Spanish edition of 1738, with Van der Gucht's beautiful plates and many inserted illustrations, in four volumes; the quarto edition, published at La Hayé, in 1746, containing thirty-one plates from Coypel's designs; Smollett's quarto edition of 1755, in two volumes, with plates by Grignion after designs by Hayman; a folio edition by Shelton, with many curious engravings, published in 1652, besides several modern editions.

In the historical department is a fine edition of Montfaucon's works in twenty folio volumes, including the "Monarchie Française"; the original edition of Dugdale's works, including the "Monasticon" with the old designs; Boissardus's "Romanæ Urbis Antiquitates," in three volumes, folio; and a large number of the old Chroniclers, in their earliest and rarest editions. Among these lat-

ter are two copies of the very scarce "Polychronicon," by Raulph Higden, the monk of Chester: the one in black-letter folio, printed in 1495, by Wynkyn de Worde, is wanting in the last page; the other, printed in 1527 by Peter Traveris, and ornamented with woodcuts, is in perfect order. Both of these volumes have marginal notes, probably in the handwriting of the day.

The collection is particularly rich in copies of original editions of old English poetry, among which are the works of Samuel Daniel, 1602; Sandy's Ovid, published in 1626; Lucan, by Sir Arthur Gorges, published in 1614, noticed in Colin Clout, and personified as Alcyon in Spenser's "Daphnaida"; "Arte of Englysh Poesie," with a fine portrait of Queen Elizabeth, published in 1589; Quarle's works; Harrington's translation of "Orlando Furioso," folio, published in 1591, with plates in compartments; Sir W. Davenant's poems, published in quarto in 1651, with an original poem in the author's hand-

writing, never published; copies of the editions of 1613 and 1648 of George Wither's poems, and Chapman's "Seven Bookes of the Iliad of Homer," published in 1598.

This latter writer, who was born in Kent, in England, in 1559, was one of the coterie formed by Daniel, Marlowe, Spenser, Shakespeare, and others, and lived upon terms of great good-fellowship with England's greatest bard. He had no mean reputation as a dramatic writer, and was, besides, highly respected as a gentleman. His social position appears to have been an excellent one, and his urbanity of manner such as to endear him to all his friends. His intimate association with Shakespeare seems to establish the fact that in his own day the great poet occupied a prominent place in society, and was as duly appreciated in his own time, as Johnson and Pope in theirs. A monument was planned and erected over the remains of Chapman by his personal friend, Inigo Jones, on the south side of St. George's in the Fields;

but in the changes which have disturbed the repose of those who were consigned to their last resting-place in that burial-ground, the monument has been destroyed.

This department possesses the black-letter folios of Chaucer in 1542 (the first complete edition), that of 1561, and that of 1598, all of which are now quite scarce; the folio editions of Milton of 1692 and 1695, possessing the old but characteristic engravings, as well as the quarto edition in two volumes, published at the expense of the Earl of Bath; Touson's edition of 1751, with plates; a large-paper copy of the edition of 1802, which contains Westall's plates; and Martin's edition of 1826, enriched by twenty-four original and beautiful engravings; likewise the first folio edition of Spenser's "Fairy Queen," published in 1609, and Fairfax's Tasso, published in 1624.

Besides the works already noticed, are Sylvester's "Du Bartus"; Warner's "Albion and England," published in 1586; "all the works of John Taylor, the water-poet, being sixty and

three in number," published in folio in 1630. This is a very rare work, and is said to have been sold for eighty guineas. A similar work to this is the "Shype of Fools of the Worlde," translated from Brandt, and published in black-letter folio, with many wood-cuts, in 1509. A perfect copy of this work is very rare. The one in the present collection is wanting in the title-page and two last leaves.[1] Its price in the catalogue Anglo-Poetica, is one hundred guineas. The copy of Taylor, in the collection, is a fine large one, and handsomely bound. The real value of these two last volumes, in a literary point of view, is perhaps not great, but still from their peculiar associations they are highly prized by *bibliophiles*. Southey says: "There is nothing in John Taylor which deserves preservation for its intrinsic merit alone, but in the collection of his pieces which I have perused there is a great deal to illustrate the manners of his age. If the water-poet had been in a higher grade of society, and

[1] In the British Museum, and the *Bibliothèque Impériale* at Paris, are perfect copies of this work.

bred to some regular profession, he would probably have been a much less distinguished person in his generation. No spoon could have suited his mouth so well as the wooden one to which he was born. Fortunately he came into the world at the right time, and lived at an age when kings and queens condescended to notice his verses, and archbishops admitted him to their tables, and mayors and corporations received him with civic honors."[1]

There is a department of curiosities in the shape of odd or rare books, which is quite interesting: among the works are the singular history of M. Ouflé; the "Encyclopædia of Man," printed in English after the manner of Hebrew publications, beginning at the close of the volume and reading to the left; "Anteros," by Baptista Fulgosius, in quarto, published in 1496. This work, "Contre l'Amour," is said to be of extraordinary rarity. Likewise the "Zodiacke of Life," published in

[1] Southey's "Uneducated Poets," p. 87.

1588; a curious manuscript in not very good Latin, with illuminated letters, upon the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, by Hen. Custas, dated 1614; Memorable Accidents and Massacres in France, in folio, published in 1598; a singular black-letter Edict of Emperor Charles V., published in 1521; a very singular Siamese work on the laws of marriage; Petri Bembi, with a frontispiece by Hans Holbein, published in 1518; "Libri Exemplorum," by Ric Pafradius, published in 1481; the original edition of "The Rogue; or, Life of De Alfarache Guzman," folio, published in 1634, translated by James Mabbe, otherwise known as Don Diego Puedesur.

There is also a copy of the "Opera Hrosvitæ Illustris Virginis," published in Nuremberg in 1501, in folio, bound in old wooden covers with brass clamps. This work, which contains some wood-engravings equal to etchings, probably the work of Durer, is fully described by Mengerand in his "Esprit des Journaux"; Pisoni's "Historia," with engravings of birds,

animals, and fishes, that would excite the surprise of the naturalist of the present day; "Novus Marcellus Doctrina," published at Venice in 1476, on large paper, with colored initials; a curious folio, manuscript history of the "Starre Chamber"; and Lithgow's "Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinationes," published in 1632, interlined with the author's manuscript emendations, and evidently intended for a new edition. This work is rare—the copy owned by King Charles brought £42 at Jadis's sale.

The collection has a large number of old Bibles, many thousand biblical illustrations, a large number of other illustrated works, and many books and prints especially devoted to the Cromwellian era of English life.

The Shakespeare department contains many separate editions of the works of the immortal bard, each of which is distinguished by some peculiarity. First among these stand the four folios published in 1623, 1632, 1664, and 1685, with a number of the original quartos

of separate plays, illustrated copies, some of which belonged to able scholars, and are enriched by their manuscript notes.

Mr. Burton sought to possess every work that alludes to the early editions of Shakespeare, or which serves in any way to illustrate the text. Among these are to be found many of the original tracts, the scarce romances, the old histories, and the rare ballads, upon which he founded his wonderful plays, or which are alluded to in the text. The collection contains the book alluded to by the quaint and facetious *Touchstone*, in "As You Like It," by which the gallants were said to quarrel with the various degrees of proof,— "the retort courteous, the countercheck quarrelsome, and the lie direct"; the "Book of Good Manners," the "Book of Sonnets" mentioned in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," the "Book of Compliments," and the "Hundred Merry Tales"; and Montaigne, translated by Florio, who is supposed by some to be the Holofernes in "Love's Labor 's Lost"; the edition of Hol-

inshed, so freely used by Shakespeare in his historical plays, with the lines quoted by him underscored with red ink.

Among the collected editions of Shakespeare is the first quarto, in seven volumes, edited by Pope, which, besides having the reputation of being the least reliable of any edition of Shakespeare's works, is defaced by an engraving of King James I. of England, which the publishers sought to palm upon the public as the likeness of the great dramatist. It is engraved by Vertue from an original painting in the Harleian collection, and does not possess the slightest resemblance to any of the various portraits of Shakespeare.

The collection contains a large-paper copy of Hanmer's beautiful quarto edition, published in 1744, with Gravelot's etchings, which is now quite rare; also, the reprint of the same work, made in 1770, and a fine copy of the quarto edition, known as Heath's, in six volumes, with proof plates after Stothard; a beautiful and

undoubtedly unique copy of the Atlas folio edition in nine volumes, published by Boydell in 1802, elegantly bound and tooled with great richness of design. This copy was selected by Boydell, with great care, for Miss Mary Nicol, sister of George Nicol, printer to the king, and a relative of Boydell. It contains proof impressions of the engravings, and an extra volume of original etchings. This work was purchased at the sale of the Stowe library. The certificates of Nicol and the librarian of the Duke of Buckingham, testifying to the value and rarity of this picked specimen of typography and engraving, are bound in the first volume of the work. The collection contains Mr. Boydell's own private portfolio, with the original etchings, artist's proof, and proof before letter, of every engraving, with the portraits, now so difficult to meet with, of the large elephant folio plates, upward of one hundred in number.

But the crowning glory is a folio copy of Shakespeare, illustrated by the collector him-

self, with a prodigality of labor and expense that places it far above any similar work ever attempted. The letter-press of this great work is a choice specimen from Nicol's types, and each play occupies a separate portfolio. These are accompanied by costly engravings of landscapes, rare portraits, maps, elegantly colored plates of costumes, and water-color drawings, executed by some of the best artists of the day. Some of the plays have over two hundred folio illustrations, each of which is beautifully inlaid or mounted, and many of the engravings are very valuable. Some of the landscapes, selected from the oldest cosmographies known, illustrating the various places mentioned in the pages of Shakespeare, are exceedingly curious as well as valuable.

In the historical plays, when possible, every character is portrayed from authoritative sources, as old tapestries, monumental brasses, or illuminated works of the age in well-executed drawings or recognized engravings. There are in this work a vast number of illus-

trations, in addition to a very numerous collection of water-color drawings, In addition to the thirty-seven plays, are two volumes devoted to Shakespeare's life and times, one volume of portraits, one volume devoted to distinguished Shakespearians, one to poems, and two to disputed plays,—the whole embracing a series of forty-two folio volumes, and forming, perhaps, the most remarkable and costly monument in this shape ever attempted by a devout worshipper of the Bard of Avon.

The volume devoted to Shakespeare's portraits was purchased by Mr. Burton at the sale of a gentleman's library, who had spent many years in making the collection, and includes various "effigies" unknown to many laborious collectors. It contains upward of one hundred plates, for the most part proofs. The value of this collection may be estimated by the fact that a celebrated English collector recently offered its possessor £60 for this single volume.

In the reading-room, directly beneath the main library, are a number of portfolios of prints

illustrative of the plays of Shakespeare, of a size too large to be included in the illustrated collection just noticed. There is likewise another copy of Shakespeare based upon Knight's pictorial royal octavo, copiously illustrated by the owner; but although the prints are numerous, they are neither as costly nor as rare as those contained in the large folio copy.

Among the curiosities of the Shakespeare collection are a number of copies of the disputed plays, printed during his lifetime, with the name of Shakespeare as their author. It is remarkable, if these plays were not at least revised by Shakespeare, that no record of a contradiction of their authorship should be found. It is not improbable that many plays written by others were given to Shakespeare to perform in his capacity as a theatrical manager, requiring certain alterations in order to adapt them to the use of the stage, which were arranged by his cunning and skilful hand, and that these plays afterward found their way into print with just sufficient of his emendations to allow his

authorship of them, in the carelessness in which he held his literary fame, to pass uncontradicted by him.

There is a copy of an old play of the period, with manuscript annotations, and the name of Shakespeare written on the title-page. It is either the veritable signature of the poet or an admirably imitated forgery. Mr. Burton inclined to the opinion that the work once belonged to Shakespeare, and that the signature is genuine. If so, it is probably the only scrap of his handwriting on this continent. This work is not included in the list given of Ireland's library, the contents of which were brought into disrepute by the remarkable literary forgeries of the son, but stands forth peculiar and unique, and furnishes much room for curious speculation.

These forgeries form a curious feature in the Shakespeare history of the last century. They were executed by William Henry Ireland, the son of a gentleman of much literary taste, and a devoted admirer of Shakespeare. Young Ire-

land, who was apprenticed to an attorney, possessed the dangerous faculty of imitating the handwriting of another person with such perfection as to deceive the most careful critic. His occupation led him much among old records, by which means he acquired a knowledge of the phraseology used in them, and the general appearance imparted by age to the paper and ink, all of which he was enabled to imitate very closely.

His father's reverence for Shakespeare induced him to endeavor to palm off upon himself and friends, probably at first as a good joke, some originals of the great poet. One of these was a declaration of his faith in the Protestant church, which, when shown to Dr. Parr, drew from this great scholar the observation that, although there were many fine things in the church service, here was a man who distanced them all.

Mr. Boaden, a gentleman of great taste, states that when he first saw these papers he looked upon them with the purest delight,

and touched them with the greatest respect, as veritable and indisputable relics. A number of gentlemen met at Mr. Ireland's house, and after carefully inspecting the manuscripts, subscribed a paper vouching their authenticity. Among these were Dr. Parr, Dr. Valpy, Pye, the Poet-Laureate, Herbert Croft, and Boswell. It is said that when Boswell approached to sign the paper he reverentially fell upon his knees, thanked God that he had witnessed the discovery, and, in the language of Simeon, exclaimed: "*Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, in pace.*"

It was now too late for young Ireland to retreat, if he ever intended to have done so, and the discovery of the imposture remained for Malone and Chalmers fully to develop. The disclosure is said to have brought the elder Mr. Ireland in sorrow to his grave, and to have bestowed upon the young scapegrace, who, either thoughtlessly, or with malice aforethought, had embittered the last years of the life of a tender parent, the epithet (which

clung to him ever afterward) of "Shakespeare Ireland."

The contemporaries of Shakespeare are quite numerous. In the cases devoted to the old English drama are the original and best editions of Chapman, Marston, Heywood, Dekker, Greene, Rowley, Massinger, Ford, Jonson, and Field. Besides the original quartos, the library contains most of the collected editions of the old dramatists, and in this department it is quite complete.

Three book-cases are devoted to works pertaining to the history of the stage, in every country and language, from the commencement of the art to the present time, and scarcely a work relating to the history, progress, or criticism of the stage can be named which is not to be found in the collection.

A full-length statue of Shakespeare in freestone, placed in a niche upon the northern side of the room, and surrounded by carved tracery of a Gothic design, has already been noticed. Upon the eastern side the Stratford bust is

placed on a bracket of the age of Elizabeth. The celebrated antiquary, Cottingham, devoted his personal attention to this work, and no other copy has been given to the world. This bust, the bracket upon which it rests, a curious old drinking-vessel of stone with a metal lid, all found in the garden of Shakespeare's house at New Place, a well-carved head of a Nubian girl, and the key-stone of an entrance arch of the theatre at Pompeii, were purchased by the owner of the present collection at the extensive sale of the personal effects of Mr. Cottingham.

There is also a beautifully carved tea-caddy, made from the wood of Shakespeare's mulberry-tree, which formerly belonged to Garrick, and a small copy of Roubilliac's statue of Shakespeare, which is the first specimen of china-ware executed at Chelsea, in England. This likewise belonged to Garrick. There are likewise two drinking-cups with silver rims, said to be made of the wood of a crab-tree under which Shakespeare slept during his celebrated frolic, formerly in the possession of Betterton.

CONCLUSION.

In depicting the career of William E. Burton as Actor, Author, and Manager, we are aware of the secondary value of his authorship, as compared with his dramatic achievements. Nevertheless, his pen was a ready and fertile one, and produced much that was meritorious, though belonging to an ephemeral order. His plays, however, continue in the list of present theatrical publications. Of his editorship it may be affirmed that his conduct of "The Gentleman's Magazine" and "Literary Souvenir" was marked by taste and discrimination; and nothing but unqualified praise can be bestowed upon his superintendence of the compilation of humorous literature known as Burton's "Cyclopædia of Wit and Humor." It is by far the most complete repository of mirth-

ful composition ever published in this country —or elsewhere, so far as we know,—and enjoys the peculiar advantage of being the only one in which the productions of American humor have any thing approaching an adequate representation. The selections throughout are indicative of great critical sagacity, and a keen perception and sympathetic appreciation, in the general arrangement, are everywhere suggested. As manager he certainly fulfilled all conditions, as we believe the relation of his successes in that sphere will sufficiently attest. But whatever his capacity in the vocations named, all is dwarfed by his transcendent powers as a comedian. He is remembered, and will be remembered, not as the author or manager, but as the great actor who swayed mankind with his supreme gift of humor. Many of the creations of his genius went away with him in death; and the traditions of his triumphs will long be distinguished in dramatic annals. Lastly, we have seen him a Shakespearian student and the possessor of a library

perfectly glorious in its expression of devotion and homage to the great poet,—and linked with that proud association we leave his memory and his name.

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